Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 263

David T. Sugimoto (ed.)

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Ishtar – Astarte – Aphrodite

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Publication subsidized by
the Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences

Internet general catalogue:
Academic Press Fribourg: www.paulusedition.ch
Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen: www.v-r.de

Camera-ready text prepared by Marcia Bodenmann (University of Zurich).

ISBN: 978-3-7278-1748-9 (Academic Press Fribourg)
ISBN: 978-3-525-54388-7 (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht)
ISSN: 1015-1850 (Orb. biblicus orient.)

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Preface

David T. SUGIMOTO

This volume is a result of the *International Conference on Ishtar/Astarte/Aphrodite: Transformation of a Goddess* held at Keio University, Tokyo, Japan, from August 25-26, 2011.[1] The conference was originally planned for March 29-30 in the same year, but was postponed owing to the earthquake, tsunami, and the subsequent nuclear problems. However, despite the change in the schedule, most of the presenters could participate in the conference, and the conference itself was quite stimulating. On the basis of the discussions during the conference, each presenter rewrote his/her presentation into an article; this volume is the collection of these articles.[2]

The theme of this volume (and the conference) is appreciating the changing nature of the goddess Ishtar/Astarte/Aphrodite. Ishtar/Astarte/Aphrodite is a goddess widely revered in the ancient West Asia and the Mediterranean world and known by different names, but these three are often closely related and sometimes identified, and the lines of their development have been speculated. However, partly because of the dissection of the research fields, their commonality and differences have not been sufficiently dealt with. This volume and the conference aimed that specialists working on different areas and periods gather together and discuss the theme from different angles; through this we expected to gain more information on their interrelationship from a wider perspective. The areas covered in this volume range from Mesopotamia through the Levant, Egypt, to the Mediterranean world, and the periods included are from the third millennium BCE to the Hellenistic period.[3]

The title of the volume itself presents the nucleus of the issue. Although the title uses a singular form of "a goddess" to refer to Ishtar/Astarte/Aphrodite, this is highly debatable, and all three goddesses may have to be understood as completely independent. In fact, as some of the articles show, other goddess such as Inanna, Isis, Hathor, the Queen of Heaven, Tanit, Venus, and various indigenous goddesses may also need to be included in the

---

1 It was sponsored by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research "Kakenhi" (no. 20401033).

2 Eleven presentations were made at the conference; this volume includes nine of them.

3 We recognize that contributions from those who study the Roman period will further enhance the significance of this study.

discussion. However, even so, most scholars working in this field recognize that they are related, and it is important to find out how they are related. Their differences may reflect the social demands of each society, in which a particular form of a goddess was worshipped.

The volume is divided into four major parts:

- The first part deals with the nature of Ishtar in Mesopotamia. Matsushima particularly focuses on Ishtar's (Inanna) aspect of goddess of love and sexual behavior and discusses the nature of the Sacred Marriage during the Sumerian period and the Divine Marriage during the Post-Sumerian period. Tsukimoto explores the iconography of "Winged Ishtar" and suggests that the wing signifies her omnipresence and protection.
- The second part deals with Astarte (ʿAthtart/ʿAshtart) in the Levant during the second half of the second millennium. Mark S. Smith collects vast information concerning ʻAthtart from Ugaritic and Emar texts under five headings: the goddess in cultic texts, the goddess of hunt and warfare, the goddess' relations to other deities, attribute animals, and international contacts with other goddesses. Since the limited nature of reference to Astarte in Ugaritic text is recognized, this will be a valuable starting point for any future research on Astarte in the Late Bronze Age Syria. Cornelius reports on the iconographical sources possibly related to Astarte from the Levant. He shows the difficulty in identifying the goddess with iconographical features, discussing Astarte's relationship with other goddesses such as Anat and Qedeshet. Tazawa, on the other hand, deals with the Egyptian materials and discusses Astarte's position among more traditional Egyptian goddesses.
- The third part focuses on the Biblical description of Astarte and the archaeological findings from the Southern Levant in the first millennium BCE. Anthonioz discusses the possible differences in significance among singular and plural forms of Asherah and Astarte. Sugimoto explores the relationship between the Judean Pillar Figurines usually found from the contexts of the eighth and seventh century BCE and Asherah, Astarte, and the "Queen of Heaven".
- The last part studies the situation in the Mediterranean world in the later period. Bloch-Smith analyses five Phoenician archaeological sites claimed to be Astarte temples, ten more sites for which literary sources refer to Astarte temples, and two particular artifacts dedicated to Astarte. This catalogue and analysis will be a useful foundation for Astarte as a Phoenician goddess. Budin discusses on the birth of Aphrodite in Cyprus. She explores the possibilities of the influence from West Asia and the importance of the indigenous goddesses of Cyprus in the formation of Aphrodite.

The collection of these articles and the discussion at the conference still could not yield a clear line of relationship between these goddesses or their

manifestations. However, the articles not only possess their own significance but also reflect the current state of research in different fields. We believe that they are helpful in setting any goddess research in a particular field in wider, yet closely connected contexts. The contributors enjoyed the discussions at the conference, and we hope that the readers of this volume will share the same pleasure.

As editor of this volume, I would like to express my gratitude to all the participants at the conference, especially those who also contributed to this book, for sharing their expertise. Ikuko Sato, Keiko Tazawa, and Mayumi Okada assisted me in organizing the conference. I would also like to thank Christoph Uehlinger, who guided the production of this volume and offered helpful academic and technical suggestions. Susan Tsumura checked the English of some of the papers of those who are not native English speakers. My thanks also go to Marcia Bodenmann, who carefully prepared our manuscripts for publication. Without her help, this book would not have materialized.

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List of Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	*Anchor Bible Dictionary*
ABL	*Assyrian and Babylonian Letters*, 14 vols., ed. by R. F. Harper, Chicago, 1892-1914
ADAJ	*Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan*
AfO	*Archiv für Orientforschung*, Horn
AHw	*Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*, 3 vols., ed. by W. von Soden, Wiesbaden, 1965-81
AJA	*American Journal of Archaeology*
ALASP	Abhandlungen zur Literatur Alt-Syrien-Palästinas, Münster
ANEP	*The Ancient Near East in Pictures Relating to the Old Testament,* ed. by J. B. Pritchard, Princeton, 1954
ANET	*Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament,* 3rd ed. with supplement, ed. by J. B. Pritchard, Princeton, 1969
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
ASJ	*Acta Sumerologica*
ASOR	American Schools of Oriental Research
BA	*Biblical Archaeologist*
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
BCE	Before the Common Era
BDB	F. Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament,* Oxford, 1907
BIFAO	*Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale,* Cairo
BN	*Biblische Notizen*
CAD	*The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
CE	The Common Era
ch.	chapter
CM	Cuneiform Monographs
COS	*The Context of Scripture*, ed. by W. W. Hallo and K. L. Younger, Jr., 3 vols., Leiden, 1997-2002
CTA	A. Herdner, *Corpus des tablettes en cunéiformes alphabétiques découvertes à Ras Shamra-Ugarit de 1929 à 1939,* Paris, 1963
CTH	E. Laroche, *Catalogue des textes hittites,* Paris, 1971
DDD	*Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible,* ed. by K. van der Toorn, B. Becking, and P. van der Horst, Leiden, 1999
DULAT	*A Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language in the Alphabetic Tradition*, 2 vols., ed. by G. Olmo Lete and J. Sanmartín, Leiden, 2003

DNWSI	*Dictionary of the North-West Semitic Inscriptions,* 2 vols., ed. by J. Hoftijzer and K. Jongeling, Leiden, 2003
E	English translation
EA	Tell el-Amarna tablets (cited from J. A. Knudtzon, O. Weber, and E. Ebeling, *Die El-Amarna Tafeln,* 2 vols., [Leipzig, 1915]; and A. F. Rainey, *El Amarna Tablets 359-379: Supplement to J. A. Knudtzon, Die El-Amarna Tafeln, 2nd rev. ed.* [AOAT 8; Kevelaer and Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1970])
EI	*Eretz Israel*
Emar	Arnaud, Daniel, *Récherches au pays d'Aštata, Emar VI: Textes sumériens et akkadiens,* 4 vols., Paris, 1985–1987
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
HdO	Handbuch der Orientalistik
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HSS	Harvard Semitic Series
ICS	M. Olivier, *Les inscriptions chypriotes syllabiques,* Paris, 1961
IEJ	*Israel Exploration Journal*
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JCS	*Journal of Cuneiform Studies*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JNWSL	*The Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages*
JRAS	*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSOTS	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
KAI	H. Donner and W. Röllig, *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften,* 3 vols.,Wiesbaden, 1971-76
KAR	E. Ebeling, *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts,* Leipzig, 1919-23
KTU	M. Dietrich, O. Loretz, and J. Sanmartín, *Die keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit,* Bd. 1, Neukirchen, 1976
KUB	Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Vorderasiatische Abteilung, *Keilschrifturkunden aus Boghazköi,* 1921-
LAPO	Littératures anciennes du Proche-Orient
LXX	Septuaginta
MARI	*Mari. Annales de Recherches Interdisciplinaires*
MB	The Middle Bronze Age
MIO	*Mitteilungen des Instituts für Orientforschung*
MRS	Mission de Ras Shamra
MT	Masoretic Text
NABU	*Nouvelles Assyriologiques Brèves et Utilitaires*
NEAEHL	*The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, ed. by E. Stern, 4 vols. + 1 supplementary volume, Jerusalem, 1993, 2008
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
OLA	Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta
OrNS	*Orientalia,* new series
PE	*Preparatio evangelica,* written by Eusebius
PEQ	*Palestine Exploration Quarterly*

POCA	Postgraduate Cypriot Archaeology Conference
PRU	C. F. A. Schaeffer and J. Nougayrol, *Le Palais Royal d'Ugarit*, Paris
PTU	F. Gröndahl, *Die Personennamen der Texte aus Ugarit*, Studia Pohl 1, Rome, 1967
RA	*Revue d'assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale*
RCU	D. Pardee, *Ritual and Cult at Ugarit*, Atlanta, GA, 2002
RES	*Revue des études sémitiques*
RlA	*Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie*, Berlin and Leipzig
RIH	J. de Rouge, *Inscriptions hiéroglyphiques copiées en Egypte*, 3 vols. Études égyptologiques 9–11, Paris, 1877–78
RS	*Ras Shamra*
RSO	Rivista degli studi orientali
SAA	State Archives of Assyria
SAAS	State Archives of Assyria Studies
SBH	G. A. Reisner, *Sumerisch-babylonische Hymnen nach Thontafeln Griechischer Zeit*, Berlin, 1986
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBLWAW	Society of Biblical Literature: Writings of the Ancient World
SHAJ	Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan
SJOT	*Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament*
TIM	Texts in the Iraq Museum, Baghdad
UF	*Ugarit-Forschungen*
UNP	*Ugaritic Narrative Pottery*, ed. by S. B. Parker, Atlanta, GA, 1997
v.	verse
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
VTSup	Vetus Testamentum Supplements
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
ZA	*Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und verwandte Gebiete und Vorderasiatische Archäologie*
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*
ZDMG	*Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft*

Abbreviations of Biblical Books

Gen	Genesis	II Kgs	II Kings
Exod	Exodus	II Chr	II Chronicles
Num	Numbers	Isa	Isaiah
Deut	Deuteronomy	Jer	Jeremiah
Jdg	Judges	Hos	Hosea
I Sam	I Samuel	Mic	Micah
II Sam	II Samuel	Ps	Psalm
I Kgs	I Kings		

Ištar and Other Goddesses of the So-Called “Sacred Marriage” in Ancient Mesopotamia

Eiko MATSUSHIMA

The goddess Ištar (Inanna in Sumerian) was without a doubt the most important female deity of Ancient Mesopotamia in all periods. However, it is extremely difficult to develop a discussion on the subject of this goddess because of her complex character. To start with, in Akkadian texts, *ištar*(*u*) may be either a proper name or a common noun that simply means “goddess.” Furthermore, as the cuneiform scripts for the proper name Ištar are the same for the common noun *ištaru*, only the context enables us to distinguish one from the other.[1]

Recently, several important studies have been published, such as the publications (including re-editions) of Old Babylonian literary texts on this goddess by B. Groneberg.[2] Her character was examined by S. Parpola,[3] as well as by P. Lapinkivi,[4] who seems to be much influenced by Parpola. We should also note the study on Ištar in Aššur by W. Meinhold.[5] We can add to these studies the numerous references that are listed in the bibliographical sections of these monographs. Thus we have a wealth of material that sheds light on many aspects of Ištar. I do not always agree with their conclusions, but instead of dwelling here on a detailed description of Ištar, I would like to explore just a few of her features, especially in relation to the so-called “Sacred Marriage Rite.”

I have carried out intensive study of this rite from the Assyro-Babylonian world,[6] but until recently I have not devoted much time to the Sumerian

1 *CAD* I/J, 271ff. gives four meanings for the common noun *ištaru*: 1. goddess, 2. personal or protective goddess, 3. statue of a goddess, and 4. Ištarān (mng. uncert.). For her name in Sumerian, and Akkadian as well as for her cult, see “Inanna/Ištar,” *RlA* 5 1/2, 1976, 74-87, written by C. Wilcke. See also S. L. Macgregor, *Beyond Hearth and Home: Women in the Public Sphere in Neo-Assyrian Society* (SAAS XXI; Helsinki, 2012), 19. Some aspects of Ištar of Assyria are discussed on pp. 18-21 of this book.

2 Most recently, *Lob der Ištar: Gebet und Ritual an die altbabylonische Venusgöttin* (CM 8; Groningen, 1997). For previous studies, see the bibliography of that book.

3 S. Parpola, *Assyrian Prophecies* (SAA IX; Helsinki, 1997), xxi-xlviii.

4 P. Lapinkivi, *The Sumerian Sacred Marriage in the Light of Comparative Evidence* (SAAS XV; Helsinki, 2004).

5 *Ištar in Aššur: Untersuchung eines Lokalkultes von ca. 2500 bis 614 v. Chr*. (AOAT 367; Münster 2009).

6 See *2.2.* of this article for the results of my previous works.

"Sacred Marriage Rite," in which Inanna/Ištar is the main heroine. However, I have always been attracted by her and the rite in question, not only in the Assyro-Babylonian world, but also in the Sumerian world, hence the subject of this paper.

1. Inanna/Ištar

1.1 A General Survey

First, let me briefly present a sketch of this goddess with a view to our discussion.

According to an important tradition, the Sumerian Inanna was the daughter of An and was closely connected with the city of Uruk. Another tradition made her the daughter of Nannar-Suen/Sîn and the sister of Utu/Šamaš.[7] No traditions ascribe to her a permanent male spouse. Dumuzi is often said to be a "lover" of Inanna, but his relationship with her seems to be very ambiguous. She is not a mother goddess, nor does she have any children.[8]

We know that many local goddesses who were originally independent of each other were syncretized with the persona of the classical goddess Inanna/Ištar. The principal one is Inanna of Uruk in the Eanna temple, but other local forms of the goddess were also recognized. We should bear this fact in mind. When we discuss the goddess Ištar, we often say that *she* (singular) has many "different aspects." Is this turn of phrase sufficiently accurate? It is possible that we are in fact speaking of plural goddesses under the single name of Ištar. We know that later in Assyria there was an Ištar of Nineveh, as well as an Ištar of Arbela, an Ištar of Babylon, etc. Are they the same Ištar worshipped in separate cultic centers, or was each one originally different?

Moreover, Inanna/Ištar was also intimately associated with the goddess Nanaya, with whom she was contemporaneously worshipped in Uruk.[9] We are overwhelmed by the amount and complexity of the data.

1.2. Some Remarkable Aspects of Inanna/Ištar

As we have seen, *she is* (or *they are*) extremely complicated with a composite character. Her characteristics can be divided into several distinct aspects, but we may note the following.

---

[7] In variant traditions she is also said to be the daughter of Enlil or even Enki.

[8] With the one possible exception of Šara. It is true that she is presented as the "mother" of some Assyrian kings; see, for example, the role of Ištar of Arbela in the oracles to Esarhaddon in Parpola's *Assyrian Prophecies* (see note 3), Collection, 4ff., as well as some of Ashurbanipals's hymns in SAA III, 10ff. However, when Ištar is presented as a mother, it is in the role of an absolute protectress: it is not a question of maternity.

[9] For Nanaya, see "Nanaja," *RlA* Bd. 9 1/2, 1998, 146-151, written by M. Stol. See also P.-A. Beaulieu, *The Pantheon of Uruk During the Neo-Babylonian Period* (CM 23; Leiden-Boston 2003), 182-216.

First, she is the goddess of sexual love and behavior, connected with extramarital sex; we often call this "prostitution." She participated in the so-called "Sacred Marriage" until the beginning of the second millennium, but the ritual in which she was the protagonist does not reflect the morals guiding human marriages. The sixth tablet of the Babylonian *Epic of Gilgameš,* in which Gilgameš reproaches Ištar for the treatment of her former lovers, is an important source for this aspect of Inanna/Ištar; that is to say, she was not at all a goddess of marriage, nor was she a mother goddess.

She is also a particularly warlike goddess. Battle is often described as the "playground of Ištar." She stood beside her favorite kings as they fought. Already in Sumerian literature, Inanna campaigned against Mount Ebih, and in a hymn to her, Išme-Dagan (1953–35 BCE), a king of the First Dynasty of Isin, describes her enormous power in many different areas, including the battlefield.[10]

She is identified with the planet Venus, both the morning and the evening star. Some specialists believe that originally there were two Mesopotamian Venus deities: the Sumerian female Venus deity Inanna, identified with the evening star, and the Semitic male Venus deity Athtar, identified with the morning star.[11] It is known that Inanna/Ištar has androgynous features. In a few cases, she is depicted as wearing a beard.[12] She thus has a bi-sexual aspect.[13]

In any case, Inanna/Ištar has several ambiguous and contradictory aspects, and thus she combines and mediates opposites. Among these aspects, we will focus on her as the goddess of sexual love and behavior, though without disregarding her other aspects.

2. The So-called "Sacred Marriage Rite"

There are numerous Sumerian love songs in which Inanna and her lover Dumuzi play the main roles. In many texts, a king of the Ur III Dynasty or of the First Dynasty of Isin takes the part of Dumuzi. The songs are generally considered to relate to a ceremony of love that took place in the temple of Inanna. Many in our field have called, and still call, the ceremony the "Sumerian Sacred Marriage (Rite)."

---

10 *A Hymn to Inana for Išme-Dagan* (*Išme-Dagan K*), ETCSL (= The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature, Oxford), 2.5.4.11, ll. 7-18. This text is listed in Y. Sefati, *Love Songs in Sumerian Literature: Critical Edition of the Dumuzi-Inanna Songs* (Bar Ilan Studies in Near Eastern Language and Culture; Jerusalem, 1998), as well as in Lapinkivi, *The Sumerian Sacred Marriage*, as one of the Dumuzi-Inanna Love Songs: no. 39 among 54 documents.

11 Inanna as the evening star is described well in *Iddin-Dagan A*, ETCSL 2.5.3.1 (listed as no. 35 in Lapinkivi, *The Sumerian Sacred Marriage*).

12 See, for example, Lapinkivi, *The Sumerian Sacred Marriage*, 155ff.

13 For this strange aspect of Ištar's sexuality, see S. Teppo, "Sacred Marriage and the Devotees of Ištar," in *Sacred Marriages* (see note 14), 75-92.

A number of important works on this subject have been published recently. Especially in the 2008 book *Sacred Marriages: The Divine-Human Sexual Metaphor from Sumer to Early Christianity,*[14] we can find a history of the discussions on the "Sacred Marriage" for more than half a century. It is not useful to repeat them here, but in order to make clear our points of discussion in this paper, I will offer a very brief sketch of the problem.

The modern term "Sacred Marriage," an English translation of the Greek *hieros gamos,* which originally referred to the marriage of Zeus and Hera, was introduced in J. Frazer's famous work *The Golden Bough,*[15] which expanded the original term to apply to symbolic marriage and cultic sexual rites, thus not always referring to the marriage of a god-goddess couple.[16] The term then attracted many scholars of cuneiform studies, including S. N. Kramer, the author of *The Sacred Marriage Rite,* published in 1969.[17] Kramer and members of his school found the main characteristic of the "Sacred Marriage" to be a "fertility cult." According to this fertility pattern, Sumerian literature, describing the love of Inanna and Dumuzi, who was eventually replaced by a Sumerian king, reflected a ritual celebrated annually during the New Year's festival. Its purpose was to produce life and an abundance of people, domestic animals, and vegetation by means of a symbolic and magical rite. The rite was, following this pattern, consummated in a sexual union between a Sumerian king in the role of Dumuzi and a high priestess in the role of Inanna during the ceremony. However, this view has now come to be outdated.

2.1. Sumerian Love Songs and the "Sacred Marriage Rite"

Most of the Sumerian "Sacred Marriage" texts are either love songs or descriptions of love between Inanna and her lover. These documents can be dated to the Ur III and early Old Babylonian periods (about 2100–1800 BCE), that is, they are almost contemporary with the ceremonies.[18] Some of the texts describe Inanna as a young girl who was full of passion for love: they could have originated in old Sumerian tales but been edited and writ-

[14] M. Nissinen and R. Uro (eds.), *Sacred Marriages: The Divine-Human Sexual Metaphor from Sumer to Early Christianity* (Winona Lake, IN, 2008).

[15] Published in 12 volumes from 1890 to 1915 (London: MacMillan). I did not refer to the original, only to the Japanese translation.

[16] In fact, the application of the terminology poses a significant problem. How do we use/distinguish, for example, "sacred marriage," "hierogamy," "theogamy," "divine marriage," "divine love ceremony/ritual," and other terms? Each contributor to *Sacred Marriages* has his/her own way of application. I prefer the expression "divine marriage" for the ceremony discussed in *2.2.* of the present article.

[17] S. N. Kramer, *The Sacred Marriage Rite: Aspects of Faith, Myth, and Ritual in Ancient Sumer* (Bloomington and London, 1969).

[18] These songs, possibly including extra love songs about Inanna, are listed with references, descriptions, and comments in Y. Sefati, *Love Songs*, as well as in Lapinkivi, *The Sumerian Sacred Marriage*, 31-58. Most of the Sumerian texts are now published in ETCSL.

ten down in those specific periods. Another and significant portion of the "Sacred Marriage" texts of the Ur III Dynasty or of the First Dynasty of Isin are concerned with providing the king who plays the role of Inanna's lover in the rite[19] with personal blessings and securing his royal throne, as well insuring the well-being and wealth of the land. Needless to say, it was Inanna who blessed the king through a personal union with him. Some cuneiform scholars have surmised that these texts reflect a marriage rite with a sexual act for the purpose of "fertility." However, is it possible to connect "fertility" with Inanna? Though she is the goddess of sexual love, she is connected with extramarital sex. I know of no mythology that defines her as mother goddess. Thus, the theory of the fertility pattern cannot explain the *raison d'être* of the ritual.

Many scholars have paid attention to the political dimension of the ceremony. In other words, the main purpose of the "Marriage" of Inanna and the king, her lover, was to legitimize the king's rule over the land of Sumer through a sexual union with the great goddess. The ritual thus secured the special relationship between the goddess Inanna and the Sumerian king, and, through him, his land and people.[20]

Some questions remain unanswered, however. First, it is not clear in what sense the term "Sacred Marriage" is to be applied in our discussion. The "Marriage" between Inanna and Dumuzi (the Sumerian king who took his place) was a mystic cult relating a goddess and a human being, even though kings during the specific period contemporary to the rituals were deified to a certain degree. Moreover, marriage in general has much to do with family, i.e., a fixed relationship between two persons (although polygamy exists in many parts of the world), but Inanna/Ištar stands far from the purpose of a marriage. Her ceremony was a ritual of sexual love, but not a marriage in the proper sense. Although most of the kings of the First dynasty of Isin called themselves "beloved *spouse* (dam.ki.áǧa) of Inanna" , one would hesitate to apply the term "Sacred Marriage" to the ritual of Inanna's cycle; in fact, some scholars refuse to do so.[21]

---

19 He is called sometimes Dumuzi, and sometimes by his proper name, even in the same text.

20 According to P. Steinkeller, the fertility aspect of the "Sacred Marriage" must not be completely denied, because it was the consequence of a reciprocal relationship between men and gods. However, it should not be understood as a mere fertility rite, but rather as a manifestation of "a stable and durable relationship between the ruler and the divine order" that exists through the institution of "en-ship," or the Sumerian priesthood. The king, as the "lord" (the en), that is, the high priest of Uruk, assumed the role of Dumuzi as the symbolic spouse of Inanna. See his article, "On Rulers, Priests and Sacred Marriage: Tracing the Evolution of Early Sumerian Kingship," in K. Watanabe (ed.), *Priests and Officials in the Ancient near East: Papers of the Second Colloquium on the Ancient Near East—The City and Its Life* (Heidelberg, 1999), 103-137.

21 See "Sacred Marriage" in J. Black and A. Green, *Gods, Demons and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia* (London, 1992), 157-156.

On the other hand, in several texts of Gudea, there is mention of the marriage rite of the city god of Lagash, Ningirsu, and his divine spouse, Bau.[22] This was a marriage between a god and a goddess, so we may call it a theogamy. The ruler of the city-state, Gudea (around 2120 BCE), prepared the bed for the ritual as well as the bridal gifts for the goddess, "in the New Year, for the Festival of Bau." The ruler may have been present somehow in the ceremony, but he never played an active role. Here, I would note that Gudea's texts are dated earlier than most of the love texts pertaining to the Inanna cycle, possibly between 30 to 300 years earlier.[23]

A second question is whether actual sexual intercourse was performed in the ceremony of Inanna and her lover. This has been seriously doubted in recent years. In fact, there is little reason to believe that the sexual union described in the texts took place on anything but the allegorical or symbolic level.[24] Thus, we must look for a new approach to our subject.

Until now, I have always used the term "Sacred Marriage" with capitals and quotation marks, as it is extremely difficult to determine how to apply this term. Scholars with little hesitation, have called the rite in question the "Sacred Marriage" of Inanna. But if it was a rite involving actual sexual intercourse, as some scholars believe, can we still apply this term to it? Moreover, there is now considerable doubt that the rite did involve sexual intercourse between humans. Too many problems remain for us to resolve.[25]

2.2. Divine Marriage Ceremonies in Babylonian and Assyrian Sources

The ritual of the "Sacred Marriage" was also celebrated in post-Sumer Mesopotamia until the first millennium BCE. The protagonists were not Ištar and Dumuzi, however, but other deities whose characteristics were different. As the ceremonies in post-Sumerian world always took place with a divine couple, except for one strange case in Emar (see *A* 2 below), I now prefer to use the term "Divine Marriage" in these cases, in order to make clear the contrast between the Sumerian ritual and the ritual in Babylonia and Assyria.

I published the documents related to the ritual in the Akkadian field in the 1980s, mainly in three separate articles in *Acta Sumerologica* (here abbreviated as *ASJ*).[26] The documentation was later re-arranged and aptly completed by M. Nissinen.[27] Recent discussions by P. Lapinkivi are based exclu-

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22 Gudea, Cylinder A and B; see ETCSL 2.1.7.

23 It is possible that Gudea's rule was partially contemporary to that of Šulgi in Ur (see Lapinkivi, 2004, 63), but the reigns of other kings, especially in the Isin Dynasty, came later.

24 See Lapinkivi, *The Sumerian Sacred Marriage*, 69-77, 243-244; she repeats and develops her view in more detail in Nissinen and Uro, *Sacred Marriages*, 22-28.

25 This is the reason why the editors of the book *Sacred Marriages* cleverly used the plural form "marriages" in the title.

26 E. Matsushima, "Le lit de Šamaš et le rituel du Mariage à l'Ebabbar," *ASJ* 7 (1985), 129-37; "Le ritual hiérogamique de Nabû," *ASJ* 9 (1987), 131-75; "Le ritual du mariage divin dans les documents accadiens," *ASJ* 10 (1988), 95-128.

27 M. Nissinen, "Akkadian Rituals and Poetry of Divine Love," in R. M. Whiting (ed.),

sively on the studies of Nissinen, but here I refer to my previous publications because I have my own opinions concerning the documents, as well as the problem of divine marriage ceremonies. Let me give a brief sketch of them.

A. Second Millennium Sources

1) Mu’ati and Nanaya

There remains a love poem involving Nanaya, who often partakes of the aspect of Inanna/Ištar as the goddess of love, and Mu’ati, her lover. The latter is listed among variant names of Nabû in a list of gods. The text is composed of dialogues between Nanaya and Mu’ati, framed by narratives which supplicate the goddess to bestow long life on King Abi-ešuh (1711–1684 BCE) and a benediction on his city of Babylon.[28]

We may notice two aspects. The goddess herself grants well-being to the king and his country, which is similar to scenes we find in many love poems in Inanna’s cycle. However, she does not bless her lover, but the king, who is not a participant in the ritual, only an attendee.

2) A text from Emar: EMR 369+402[29]

This is a long text featuring (1) the selection of the priestess *entu* from among the daughters of Emar for consecration to the God of the Storm (IŠKUR), (2) her hairdressing, (3) her enthronement, and (4) her entrance to the bedchamber for the marriage to the God of the Storm, (5) the banquet after the ceremony of the “marriage.” The text describes a unique ritual. Moreover, the text speaks only of the acts of the priestess from her selection to the banquet, never those of the god. During the marriage ceremony did she stay in the bed alone, or did she stay with a human who played the role of the God of the Storm? We know nothing about the core of the ritual, and do not know how to treat this document in our study.[30]

3) *Erbamma rē’û*

A tablet dated to the Middle Babylonian period contains a love song which is now identified as one of the pieces listed in catalogs of love songs such

Mythology and Mythologies (Melammu Symposia II; Helsinki, 2001), 93-136.

[28] First published by W. G. Lambert in “Divine Love Lyrics from the Reign of Abi-ešuh,” *MIO* 12 (1966), 41-56. For more references, see Lapinkivi, *The Sumerian Sacred Marriage*, 55.

[29] D. Arnaud, *Textes sumériens et accadiens* (*Emar* VI; Paris, 1986), Vol. 1, 100-101, 123, Vol. 2, 595-596 (copies), Vol. 3, 326-337 (transcriptions and translation). The text is revised by D. E. Fleming, *The Installation of Baal’s High Priestess at Emar: A Window on Ancient Syrian Religion* (HSS 42; Atlanta, GA, 1992).

[30] See also Mark S. Smith’s article “Sacred Marriage in the Ugaritic Texts? The Case of KTU/CAT 1.23 (Rituals and Myths of the Goodly Gods),” in Nissinen and Uro, *Sacred Marriages*, 93-113.

as KAR 158.[31] The text talks about the love of Ištar and Dumuzi, but we do not know whether it had something to do with a religious rite. Furthermore, we know nothing exact about the original love songs whose incipits are listed in *KAR* 158, except for this *Erbamma rē'û.*

B. First Millennium Sources

There are more sources from the first millennium:

1) Nabû and Tašmētu in Assyria

The ceremonial marriage of Nabû and Tašmētu is perhaps best documented in the divine marriage rituals of the first millennium. There are three letters—*ABL* 65, 113, and 366—from high temple officials to the Assyrian king or to the crown prince dated to the reign of Esarhaddon (680–669 BCE). We also have the text of some attractive love lyrics of Nabû and Tašmētu, *TIM* 9 54,[32] and a hymn of Assurbanipal (668–627 BCE) to this divine couple, as well as some brief possible references to this ceremony.[33] With these sources, we can roughly reconstruct the ritual.

The ritual took place annually in the temple of Nabû at Kalhu, a capital of Assyria, at the beginning of the month of Ayyar (the second month). Nabû and Tašmētu entered the *bīt erši* (bedchamber) on the third (or fourth) day.[34] The sacrifices in the names of members of the royal family were prepared in the sanctuary, and the "royal meals" were served.[35] The high official of the temple (*hazannu*) stayed at the palace and made detailed reports to the king. During the ritual, Nabû, either alone or with Tašmētu, went out to the "garden," where he hunted.

There are many details about the ritual which could be discussed, but here we focus on a passage from *ABL* 366, in which a short round trip of Nabû is mentioned. The expression *šēpa pašāru* ("to release the feet") is used. I understand from this expression that the statue of the god was removed from the pedestal in order to be taken out of the sanctuary.[36]

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31 J. A. Black, "Babylonian Ballads: A New Genre," *JAOS* 103/1 (1983), 25-34.

32 A revision of the text with a detailed analysis appears in M. Nissinen, "Love Lyrics of Nabû and Tašmētu: An Assyrian Song of Songs?" in M. Dietrich and I. Kottsieper (eds.), *"Und Mose schrieb dieses Lied auf"*: *Festschrift für Oswald Loretz* (AOAT 250; Münster, 1998), 585-634.

33 For detailed discussions, see E. Matsushima, "Le ritual hiérogamique de Nabû," *ASJ* 9 (note 26).

34 *ABL* 65, in which the ceremony of Ajjaru 3 is described, mentions Nabû but not Tašmētu. It is therefore possible that on this day Tašmētu stayed somewhere else.

35 Sacrifices were performed by "Assurbanipal, firstborn son of the king," "Šamaš-šum-ukīn, son of the king of Babylon," and others (*ABL* 113 r. 6ff.). Thus, we know the date of the ritual was sometime in the reign of Esarhaddon.

36 *ABL* 366 r. 1-3: UD.11.KÁM [d]PA *uṣ-ṣa-a šepa* (GÌR)-*šú-u i-pa-áš!-šar a-na am-ba-as-si il-lak* : the eleventh day Nabû goes out. He will "release his feet." He goes to the *ambassu*. The phrase is translated in SAA XIII, 62 as "Nabû will go out and stretch his legs" with the reference to the "*lismu ša Nabû*", which took place in a street of Assur in the month

Although an alternative interpretation has been proposed for this passage, we know in any case that the divine statues were in the temple and played key roles in Mesopotamian liturgies. People transported the statues from one place to another by chariot or by a portable seat, each time performing a ritual. In the first millennium, statues of great gods were made of fine wood and thus were rather light. At least, they were portable on an occasion such as this one.

Turning our attention to the composition of the lyrical text *TIM* 9 54, we see in it an alternation of the words of Nabû, Tašmētu (either monologues or dialogues, in a love context), and the chorus, which addresses Nabû, Tašmētu, or both of them. Several passages remind us of descriptions in *ABL* 65, 113, and 366. Thus, *TIM* 9 54, a lyrical text, is definitely related to the marriage rite of Nabû and Tašmētu, which is also attested to by contemporary documents. It is rare that a religious ceremony is documented in secular sources. In fact, as far as I know, the ritual marriage of Nabû and Tašmētu, whose procedure is depicted in a religio-literary text, is the only one which is also attested in more or less detail by contemporary secular texts. As for other divine marriages, we do not have enough documents to sufficiently understand the features. What, then, was the nature of *TIM* 9 54? We have already noted that the ceremony took place in a setting with divine statues. Could not *TIM* 9 54 be a kind of scenario/libretto of a religious drama in the temple, performed by divine statues along with solo singers who recited the parts of protagonists and the chorus which recited the narration?[37]

If my view is correct, the divine marriage rite was in fact a kind of marionette drama. The so-called "love lyrics of Nabû and Tašmētu," *TIM* 9 54, would then be the scenario/libretto of this marionette drama, recited by persons attached to the temple.

2) Nabû and Nanaya in Babylonia, probably in Uruk

A Late Babylonian ritual calendar, *SBH* 8 ii 12ff., describes the ritual *hadaššūtu* (marriage) of Nabû and Nanaya at the beginning of the month of Ayyar. This rite has much in common with the Assyrian ritual of Nabû and Tašmētu. We generally say that in Babylonia Nanaya assumed the role of spouse, whereas in Assyria it was Tašmētu who took the role, but

of Ayyar; see also Nissinen, "Love Lyrics," 593. However, the text describes the ritual in Kalhu, not in Assur. It seems to me simpler to think here about a divine statue instead of postulating a ritual the nature of which is unknown to us.

37 After studying the theme of "divine marriage ceremonies" in the Assyro-Babylonian world, I became interested in and studied divine garments on the statues. That is the reason why I would stress the importance of statues in religious rituals. See my articles "On the Material Related to the Clothing Ceremony – *lubuštu* in the Later Periods in Babylonia" in *ASJ* 16 (1994), 177-200; "On the *lubuštu* Ceremony of Bēl in the Seventh Century B.C." *ASJ* 20 (1998), 111-119, etc.

the relationships among Nabû, Tašmētu, and Nanaya were not simple.[38] Nanaya, called the "Queen of Uruk," was virtually identical with Ištar as a goddess of sexual behavior.[39]

3) Marduk and Zarpanītu in Babylon

In some of his royal inscriptions, Assurbanipal mentions that he dedicated a ceremonial bed to Marduk and Zarpanītu for their marriage and for lovemaking (*hašādu šakānu, ru'āmu epēšu*), expecting that the goddess would pronounce a bad word about his enemy on the "bed of her household." Other brief references also exist.

4) *Quršu* ritual of Mulissu in Assur
In texts from Aššur, a brief mention can be found of the *quršu* ritual, possibly related to the marriage of the goddess Mulissu, the spouse of the national god Aššur.[40]

5) Šamaš and Aya in Sippar
Some economic texts in the Chaldean Period mention the ceremonial bed of Šamaš in his Ebabbar temple in Sippar. Besides, Nabonidus (556–539 BCE) in one of his royal inscriptions prays to the goddess Aya, asking her to speak a good word on his behalf to her husband, Šamaš, in their bedroom (*bīt majjāli*) where the marriage was consummated.[41]

6) Anu and Antu in Uruk
Sources from Seleucid Uruk describe a ceremony of the month of Tašrītu (seventh month) which included a ritual of marriage (*parṣi ša hašādu*) between Anu and his spouse, Antu. Gods of the temple assisted in the ceremony. Mention of the "sandals" of the goddess clearly indicates that the ritual took place using their statues.

For now I will not go into more details about divine marriage ceremonies in the first millennium, but I would like to bring up several aspects of them.

In these ceremonies the protagonists were the main god of the city and his spouse, as Marduk and Zarpanītu, possibly Aššur and Mulissu, Nabû and Tašmētu or Nanaja, Šamaš and Aya, and Anu and Antu. The king and the royal family were responsible for the ceremony, preparing the furnishings,

[38] These three deities seem to have been worshiped in Babylonia, following a text cataloguing the evil deeds of Nabû-šumu-iškun, ruler of Babylonia about 760–748 BCE. See S. W. Cole, "The Crimes and Sacrileges of Nabû-šumu-iškun," *ZA* 84 (1994), 220-252.

[39] See P.-A. Beaulieu, *op. cit.*, note 9, 185-187, as well as Stol, "Nanaja," 147.

[40] G. Van Driel, *The Cult of Assur* (Assen, 1968), 40.

[41] As F. Joanness correctly indicated in "Les temples de Sippar et leurs trésors à l'époque néo-babylonienne," *RA* 86 (1992), 159-184. In my previous article "Le lit de Šamaš et le rituel du Mariage à l'Ebabbar" (1985), I confused "the Lady of Sippar" and Aya; we must distinguish these two goddesses.

sacrifices, and banquets, but they did not take part in the ritual itself, which was performed by divine statues.

The goddess often played an intermediary role between the king (and/or his family) and her husband, the great god of the country. On behalf of her royal devotee, Tašmētu intercedes with Nabû, Zarpanītu with Marduk, Aya with Šamaš, etc. The intercession of goddesses, as well as that of the gods, is discussed in several articles in *Sacred Marriages,* especially that by B. Pongratz-Leisten.[42] However, contrary to the opinion of many of them, I understand that the role of Tašmētu, Zarpanītu, Aya, etc. is not the same as the role of Ištar. Ištar always retains a major position with overwhelming power in the pantheon. She protects the king by her own will, and even if she intercedes for the king, she is standing before the chief gods of the pantheon or before the supreme divine council, that is to say, in a public place, whereas Tašmētu for example, intercedes with her husband in her bedroom, that is to say, in a very private space. The wedding bed, though private, was the place of her intercession, and so the place of her activities.

3. The So-called Sumerian “Sacred Marriage” and Post-Sumer Mesopotamian “Divine Marriage”: Similar or Different?

We have briefly examined the so-called “Sacred Marriage” in Sumer and the divine marriage in post-Sumer Mesopotamia. The main actors in the ritual changed in later periods. Could we postulate that the Sumerian-type ritual still continued to be celebrated in later periods in Mesopotamia, or were the two types of ritual essentially different? In order to advance the discussion, I would mention the following points:

1) Already in the Sumerian world, two patterns of the ritual existed: Inanna’s cycle and the Ningirsu-Bau ceremony. The first one was recorded in many literary compositions and specific. Inanna was always the protagonist of the ritual. She granted benefits to the king of Sumer, her lover in the ritual. He originated as a human being, although he enjoyed a short period of deification. The goddess Inanna assumed a much higher position than that of her lover. The second pattern, which was earlier than most of the rituals related to the first pattern, was the marriage rite of the city god and his divine spouse, that is to say a theogamy. It was a rather common phenomenon in the ancient worlds.

2) In the Akkadian ritual of the first millennium, the gods such as Nabû, Marduk, Šamaš, etc. were the main heroes, whereas the goddesses ranked second, as merely the spouse of a great god.

[42] See Nissinen and Uro, *Sacred Marriages,* 65-66.

Ancient Mesopotamia was a male-dominated world. The possibilities for women were limited in society as well as in the family. However, as the second-ranking person, she was effective in her private area, especially in her bedroom. A goddess could offer many suggestions to her husband, be an intermediary between a god and a human being, and request the great god, her husband, to grant many benefits to the king, his land, and his people.

3) We presently have no evidence of official love rituals in Akkadian material in which Ištar played the main role.[43] Instead of her, we find Nanaya present in some texts, as mentioned above.[44] Nevertheless, the legend of Inanna-Dumuzi's love continued to be recited and had a significant influence on many aspects of the Mesopotamian culture. How, then, do we understand the total absence of Ištar from love ceremonies? Do we postulate that, when the Sumerian Inanna was syncretized with the Semitic Ištar, something happened, or at least, something changed in her characteristics?

   In several pieces of Inanna's cycle texts in Sumerian, Inanna is already described as a goddess of overwhelming capability and power, even in the sphere of war.[45] However, in other pieces of Inanna's cycle documents, written down in almost the same period but perhaps originating earlier, Inanna, daughter of Nannar/Suen and Ningal, is described as a young, pretty, naïve and childlike girl. Consequently, we find in the literature of Innana's cycle itself two types of Inanna: a great and powerful goddess and a young naïve girl. What was the reason for the difference, and what is its background?

4) We have said that many scholars now doubt that a marriage rite involving human intercourse took place in Sumer. Certain scholars find the ritual

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43 There might be opposing views. First, *Erbamma rē'û* (discussed in *2.2*) talks about the love of Ištar and Dumuzi. The religious background of this text is uncertain, however. Second, a strange ritual, described in texts published by W. G. Lambert, in *Unity and Diversity* (Baltimore and London, 1975), 98-135, can be understood as a "love ritual" of Marduk, Zarpanitu, and Ištar of Babylon. However, the nature of the ritual is different from others and difficult to understand. It seems that the rivalry and hostility between the two goddesses is the main subject of the text. Therefore, I prefer not to include them in our study.

44 For some scholars, the Sumerian "Sacred Marriage" thus continued to be celebrated in post-Sumer Mesopotamia, with Dumuzi being succeeded by Mu'ati, who is Nabû by another name. For these scholars, the marriage rite of Nabû and Nanaya belongs to the same tradition as the Inanna-Dumuzi-type of "Sacred Marriage"; see Lapinkivi, *The Sumerian Sacred Marriage*, 81-82. I would mention that Nanaya is already present in two Sumerian texts of Inanna's cycle, namely, no. 25 (ETCSL 4.07.8) and no. 34 (ETCSL 2.5.1.3) of the Sefati/Lapinkivi list (see note 10).

45 For example, *Šulgi X* = ETCSL 2.4.2.24 ll. 49ff., *Iddin-Dagan A* = ETCSL 2.5.3.1 (certain lines already describe "male prostitutes").

purely symbolic or allegorical. Here, we should recall the ceremony of Nabû in the first millennium, in my view a religious marionette drama with a lyrical text that was used as the scenario/libretto of the drama.

In one of Inanna’s cycle texts, *Išme-Dagan A + V* (a self-praise song), at ll. 297-315, we see the king’s copper statues standing before those of Enlil and Ninlil in their temple. This means that a king’s statues were placed before divine statues. A similar scene might have been found in the sanctuary of Inanna.

Is it too fantastic to imagine a love ritual with a statue of the king, the incarnation of Dumuzi, and a statue of Inanna, finely costumed and decorated with jewelry, playing the roles? And parts of the love songs of Inanna’s cycle, could they not have been recited or sung by priests, priestesses, and other people in the sanctuary as scenarios or as background songs? If we suppose that this is possible, we can easily understand the process of the ritual and the nature of the literary texts that we have called the “love songs of Inanna and Dumuzi.” Perhaps some pieces were not for liturgical use, but only poetic compositions inspired by the nature of the ritual. Most of them, however, could have been “scenarios/librettos,” or at least, background songs.

I would like to propose that from the third to the first millennium, the ceremony of the so-called “Sacred Marriage” in Mesopotamia always took place in the form of a religious marionette drama acted out by divine statues: the ritual of Ningirsu and Bau, that of Inanna and her lover, and those of the divine marriage rite of the first millennium—all of them could have been performed in a similar way. This method of inferring evidence from the first millennium in order to reconstruct third and second millennium rituals might be criticized, but we must also be aware of the fact that Mesopotamia was a very traditional and conservative world.

We must not disregard the statues. In Ancient Mesopotamia, divine statues were considered to be the gods and goddesses themselves. Though the ceremonies may look like marionette dramas to us, the people in Mesopotamia found in them a vivid reality.

4. Tentative Conclusion

I would like to propose here a possible, though tentative, hypothesis: The “Sacred Marriage” of Inanna/Ištar is not to be classified as a divine-divine marriage. It was a ceremony of the Ur III or the First Dynasty of Isin of a personal union (even if it was allegorical or symbolic) between the great goddess Inanna/Ištar and a human king. The ceremony took place during the time when the Semitic people were gaining political power in Mesopotamia, but the Sumerian tradition still maintained a high priority in many areas. The characteristics of Ištar, under the name of Inanna in Sumerian, must have been (re)composed at that period. The ritual of love in which Ištar/Inanna

played the main role was carried out during that time, in my view with statues. A number of scenarios/librettos and background songs were composed for use in this rite. These pieces, which we now call the "Sumerian Sacred Marriage texts," certainly gave a concrete reality to the symbolic or allegorical ceremony.

We understand the following points: the complex characteristics of Ištar/Inanna have their background in that specific period, namely, Ur III to Isin First. She was the great goddess of Uruk, one of the most important cities of the Sumerian world. We may also reflect on the concerns of the kings of that time. It was a time of transition. Many ethnological, linguistic, and cultural elements were introduced into the country. The kings of the Ur III and the First Isin Dynasties, whatever origin, alliance, or affinity they had, needed the firm support of the great Sumerian goddess Inanna/Ištar of Uruk. That must be why they had to perform a ritual through which even the deification of a human king was available, thanks to that especially high-ranking and powerful goddess.

I would add one more point here: Ištar/Inanna disappeared from the sacred love rite after the second half of the second millennium. In the ritual of divine marriage celebrated in the first millennium, the goddess was just the spouse, the second-ranking person behind her husband, at least from the social perspective of the time. In contrast to this, the outstanding goddess Ištar maintained her overwhelming power over the course of time, as the goddess of extramarital sexual love, of war, and a great patron of the kingship, especially in Assyria. Other goddesses remained generally unassuming beside their husbands, but they in fact played significant roles in the "bed of the marriage rite." Such a goddess could exert much influence through the marriage rite and secure the well-being of the king and his family. Her role could not be easily seen from the outside, but behind the scenes she was effective.

In any case, from the third to the first millennium, the royal power always required the help of goddesses.

“In the Shadow of Thy Wings”: A Review of the Winged Goddess in Ancient Near Eastern Iconography

Akio TSUKIMOTO

1. Introduction

As is well known, Ištar, Inanna in Sumerian, was the most prominent female deity through the ages in Ancient Mesopotamia. Although she, represented by the star of Venus, is widely known as the goddess of “love and war,” her divine functions are not limited to “love and war.” As a large number of literary works such as myths, hymns, and prayers show, the goddess has many other, occasionally contradictory, functional aspects relating to the cosmos, the netherworld, fecundity, violence, diseases, magic, oaths, oracles, and so on.[1]

Since it is impossible to look at every aspect of Ištar’s character in such a short paper as this, the following discussion will be limited to one of her distinctive iconographical features: wings. A winged goddess appears in iconography throughout the ages, even if she is not always identified with Ištar. In this respect Ištar is conspicuously unusual, because ancient Mesopotamian iconography does not know any other case in which such a prominent deity is portrayed as winged. It is rather subordinate divine beings such as genii or demons that are represented as winged figures.

2. The Akkad Period

Anthropomorphism materialized in Mesopotamia first in the Akkad period. Ištar (Inanna) was depicted then as a longhaired woman wearing a horned headdress and a long robe and, in many cases, carrying weapons on her back (Fig. 1). The weapons are taken as attributes that signify her character as the goddess of war. In the Early Dynastic period of Sumer the goddess was symbolized not in human form, but in the form of a post of bundled reeds,

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1 C. Wilcke, “Inanna/Ištar,” in *RlA*, 5. Band (1976–1980), 74-87; T. Abush, “Ishtar,” in *DDD*, 452-456; B. Groneberg, *Lob der Ištar: Gebet und Ritual an die altbabylonische Venusgöttin* (CM 8; Groningen: Styx, 1997), 121ff.; W. Meinhold, *Ištar in Aššur: Untersuchung eines Lokalkultes von ca. 2500 bis 614 v. Chr.* (AOAT 367; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2009).



Fig. 1: W. Orthmann, *Der Alte Orient* (Propyläen Kunstgeschichte 14; Berlin: Propyläen Verlag, 1975), 135h.



Fig. 2: Orthmann, *ibid.*, 126a.

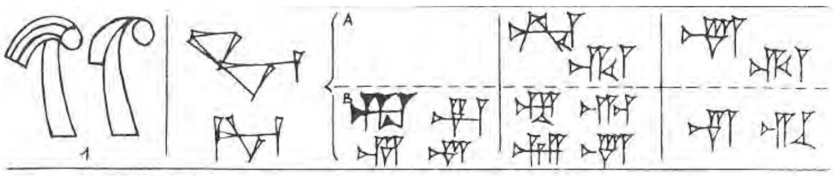


Fig. 3: L. Labat, *Manuel d'épigraphie akkadienne*, Geuthner, 6ème éd., Paris: Geuthner, 1995, 84.

from which INNIN (MÙŠ), the cuneiform sign for Inanna/Ištar, developed (Figs. 2–3).[2]

We know so far three Akkadian cylinder seals on which Ištar is depicted with a pair of outstretched wings. One of them shows a scene with five deities (Fig. 4): The winged Ištar as the morning star is sinking down into the top of a mountain, whereas in the center of the picture, the sun god Shamash,

[2] For the cuneiform sign and its reading, see B. Groneberg, *Die Götter des Zweistromlandes* (Düsseldorf/Zürich: Artemis & Winkler, 2004), 22f.



Fig. 4: R. M. Boehmer, *Die Entwicklung der Glyptik während der Akkad-Zeit* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1965), fig. 377.



Fig. 5: J. B. Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East in Pictures Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), fig. 526.

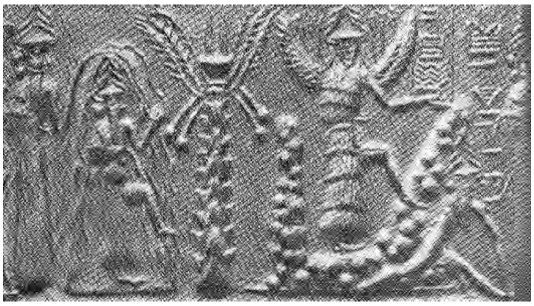


Fig. 6: Boehmer, *Die Entwicklung der Glyptik während der Akkad-Zeit* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1965), fig. 379.

with a saw in his hand, can be seen rising from between *māšu* "the twin mountains." The other three gods are the heroic god Ninurta with a bow, Ea as the god of sweet water, and Usum, Ea's vizier, with the Janus faces. On the other two seals, the winged Ištar is characterized as the goddess of war: she carries the weapons on her back as well as in her hand, and on one (Fig. 5) she has her bare foot upon a couchant lion, her attendant animal, and on the other (Fig. 6), upon the back of a fleeing male deity.

3. The Old Babylonian Period

Although this kind of figure of Ištar must have continued further into the Old Babylonian period, we find only a few iconographical sources depicting the winged Ištar from Mesopotamia. Most material of this period comes



Fig. 7: B. Brentjes, *Alte Siegelkunst des Vorderen Orients* (Leipzig: VEB E. A. Seemann Verlag, 1983), 171.



Fig. 8: B. Teissier, *Ancient Near Eastern Cylinder Seals from the Marcopoli Collection* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), fig. 489.



Fig. 9: E. Bleibtreu, *Rollsiegel aus dem Vorderen Orient: Sonderausstellung der Ägyptisch-Orientalischen Sammlung im Münzkabinett des Kunsthistorischen Museums in Wien* (Wien, 1981), no. 78.



Fig. 10: B. Teissier, *Ancient Near Eastern Cylinder Seals from the Marcopoli Collection* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), fig. 493.

rather from Syria. For example, on the cylinder seal that, according to its legend, was owned by Mukannishum, a servant of Zimrilim the king of Mari, a winged goddess holding a scimitar in her right hand stands behind a ruler wearing a Syrian-styled robe who is about to attack his enemies (Fig. 7). It cannot be discerned clearly if the goddess is four-winged or just two-winged.

A winged goddess holding a weapon in her hand and facing a ruler appears to have been a popular motif in Old Syrian cylinder seals (Figs. 8, 9).[3] Such a figure is also preserved in the seal impressions from Alalakh VII.[4] However, here the winged goddess facing the weather god is to be interpreted as Šala, consort of the weather god.[5] Two more distinguishing motifs were added to the winged goddess in the Old Syrian cylinder seals: nakedness and holding items other than weapons. We have examples of a winged nude goddess holding a lotus blossom in her hand[6] or an animal in each hand (Fig. 10)[7]. On the other hand, while a naked female appears in Old Assyrian and Babylonian cylinder seals, she is never winged.[8]

We have several remarkable Old Babylonian terracotta plaques on which a winged naked female with a horned headdress is depicted (Figs. 11–14).[9] In all of these the female wears a horned headdress and has wings pointing down. The posture of the hands shows certain variations: they are spread out and raised (Figs. 11, 12),[10] are making a blessing gesture (Fig. 13), or are joined under the breast (Fig. 14). Almost the same type of figure with raised hands is incised on a pottery vessel from the same period (Fig. 15).

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3 See E. Unger, *Der Beginn der altmesopotamischen Siegelbildforschung, eine Leistung der österreichischen Orientalistik* (Wien, 1966), pl. X, fig. 18 (reproduced in R. M. Boehmer, ZDMG 119, 167); U. Winter, *Frau und Göttin: Exegetische und ikonographische Studien zum weiblichen Gottesbild im Alten Israel und in dessen Umwelt* (OBO 53; Fribourg: Universitätverlag/Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983), figs. 191-201, 203-207; E. Porada, "The Cylinder Seal from Tell el-Dabʿa," AJA 88 (1984), pl. 65.2 [reproduced in V. Haas, *Geschichte der hethitischen Religion* (HO I/15; Leiden: Brill, 1994), fig. 56]; B. Teissier, *Ancient Near Eastern Cylinder Seals from the Marcopoli Collection* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), figs. 475, 476, 483, 486-494. Teissier assumes that the winged female deity represents Ištar. See *ibid*., 80f.

4 See D. Collon, *The Seal Impressions from Tell Atchana/Alalakh* (AOAT 27; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1975), pl. XX (figs. 15, 44, 46, 48).

5 See, for example, U. Winter, *op. cit.*, figs. 424, 430.

6 E. Porada, ed., *The Collection of the Pierpont Morgan Library* (Corpus of Ancient Near Eastern Seals in North American Collections I; Washington, D.C., 1948), no. 963 (reproduced in U. Winter, *op. cit.*, fig. 134).

7 A winged goddess holding a "jump rope" is not unusual in the Old Syrian period (see U. Winter, *op. cit.*, fig. 285). In one particular case, a winged nude goddess holds a man in each hand (U. Winter, *op. cit.*, fig. 379).

8 See, for examples, U. Winter, *op. cit.*, figs. 81-95, 98, 100-115, 117f.

9 See D. Collon, *The Queen of the Night* (London: The British Museum Press, 2005), figs. 5a-b, 6a-g.

10 P. Albenda has raised doubts about the authenticity of Burney's relief (Fig. 11) ("The Burney Relief Reconsidered," *Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University* 2/2 [1970], 86-93; "The 'Queen of the Night' Plaque: a Revisit," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 125/2 [2005], 171-190). For a reply, see D. Collon, "The Queen under Attack – A Rejoinder," *Iraq* LXIX (2007), 43-51.

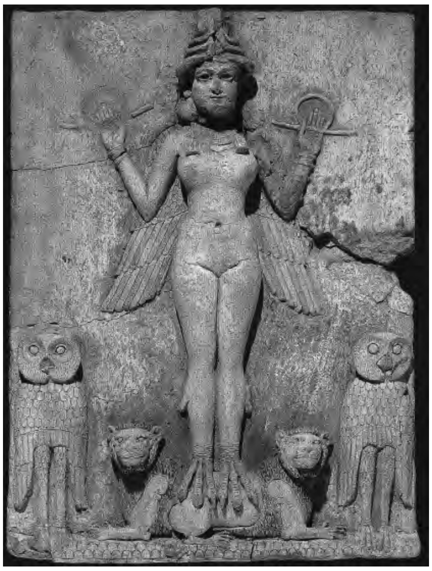


Fig. 11: D. Collon, *The Queen of the Night* (London: The British Museum Press, 2005), fig. 1.



Fig. 12: B. Groneberg, *Lob der Ištar. Gebet und Ritual an die altbabylonische Venusgöttin* (CM 8; Groningen: Styx, 1997), fig. XL.



Fig. 13: R. Opificius, *Das altbabylonische Terrakottarelief* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1961), fig. 208.



Fig. 14: D. Collon, *The Queen of the Night* (London: British Museum Press, 2005), fig. 5b.

The identification of this female has been disputed. In the case of Barney's relief (Fig. 11), the headdress with fourfold horns and the "ring and rod" in her hands show that she is a divine being of high rank and has ruling powers. Th. Jacobsen identified her with Ištar, in particular because she is standing on two couchant lions, Ištar's attendant animals[11] (see Figs. 1 and 5). The talons on her feet, on the other hand, might suggest a demonic character. Accordingly, some scholars regarded her as Lilith, the night demon. Most recently D. Collon, calling the deity the "Queen of the Night," made the suggestion that the female could be identified with Ereshkigal, queen of the netherworld[12]. The lead figurine of the winged and naked goddess from Karahöyük seems to have talons, too (Fig. 16).

It should be noted, however, that in the "investiture" wall painting from Mari as well as in other Old Babylonian iconographical materials, Ištar is pictured holding the "ring and rod," a symbol of a ruling power.[13] This kind of feature of Ištar continues to be used further, even into the Neo-Assyrian period.[14] The name "Queen of the Night," which D. Collon gave to the naked lady on Barney's terracotta, also reminds us of the "goddess of the night," one of the manifestations of Ištar-Šauška in the Hittite religious tradition.[15] Therefore, despite Collon's suggestion, the identification of the female with Ištar should not easily be abandoned.

The same type of winged female deity has not been discovered from the later periods in Mesopotamia. However, this does not mean that it disappeared entirely thereafter. It seems rather to have survived in peripheral regions, as a bronze winged figure with talons from Oboda, a Nabatean site of the Roman period, suggests (Fig. 17).[16]

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[11] T. Jacobsen, "Pictures and Pictorial Language (The Burney Relief)," in M. Mindlin et al., eds., *Figurative Language in the Ancient Near East* (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1987), 1-11.

[12] D. Collon, *The Queen of the Night*, 39ff.

[13] See P. Amiet, *L'art antique du Proche-Orient* (Paris, 1977), fig. 65 (reproduced in U. Winter, *op. cit.*, fig. 186). See also Anubanini's rock relief (W. Orthmann, *Der Alte Orient*, Propyläen Kunstgeschichte, Bd. 14; Berlin: Propyläen, 1975, fig. 183). The same type of Ištar is found on an Old Assyrian seal impression (see U. Winter, *op. cit.*, fig. 87). The "ring and rod" as a symbol of ruling powers goes back to the Neo-Sumerian period, as the Ur-Namma stela shows (see A. Moortgat, *Die Kunst des alten Mesopotamien*, Köln: DuMont, 1967, fig. 201).

[14] See the cylinder seal BM 105111 (S. Parpola, *Assyrian Prophecies* [SAA IX, Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1997], fig. 7).

[15] See V. Haas, *Geschichte der hethitischen Religion* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 352f.

[16] See also examples of a winged goddess with talons in Nuzi (D. L. Stein, "Mythologische Inhalte der Nuzi-Glyptik," in V. Haas, ed., *Hurriter und Hurritisch*, Xenia 21 [1988], figs. 12 and 13).

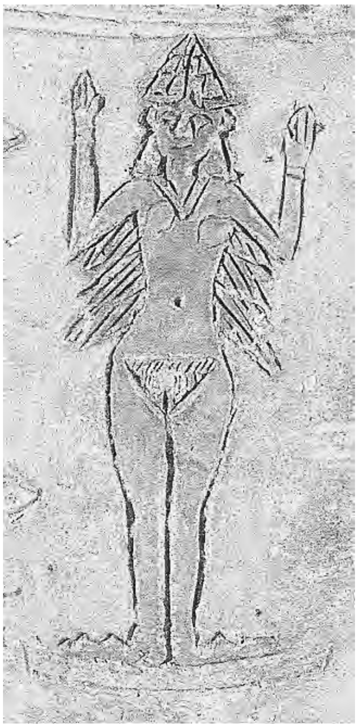


Fig. 15: Louvre HP, AO17000.



Fig. 16: V. Haas, *Geschichte der hethitischen Religion* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), fig. 65.



Fig. 17: A. Negev, ed., *The Architecture of Oboda* (Qedem 36; Jerusalem, 1997), 201.

4. The Second Half of the Second Millennium BCE

From the second half of the second millennium BCE we find many iconographical materials depicting winged female figures. They originated mostly in the Syrian, Anatolian and Mediterranean regions.[17]

Cylinder seals of the Syro-Mittanian style provide a large number of the examples. In many cases, the winged female deity is naked (Figs. 18–21),[18] which appears to be a peripheral tradition that may go back to the Old Syrian period (Fig. 10). The deity sometimes supports her breasts by both hands (Fig. 20) and sometimes holds animals, including fish (Figs. 21, 22). E. Porada identifies the winged nude deity holding animals with Ištar-Šauška, while she identifies naked female deities with hanging wings as Ištar-figures.[19]

We also find a winged goddess in a long slit robe. We can largely distinugish three types: those carrying a weapon in their hand,[20] those holding animals by both hands (Fig. 22),[21] and those holding a dove in their extended left hand (Fig. 23).[22] The first type that shows an aspect of the war goddess that goes back beyond the Old Babylonian period (see Figs. 7–9) to the Akkad period (see Figs. 5, 6), whereas the latter two types appear to have originated in the Syro-Hittite religious tradition.

A bronze plaque from Anatolia presents a four-winged naked goddess holding in each hand a lion by the leg (Fig. 24). The motif of holding a lion by its hind leg, unlike that of holding herbivores (see Figs. 21, 22), symbolizes overwhelming power which can subdue chaotic forces into order.[23] The four-winged goddess first occurred in the Late Bronze age, and may have been influenced by the figure of a scarab spreading its four wings. A stone relief from Anatolia (Fig. 25) reveals another aspect of the winged goddess. She is characterized here as a mother goddess by the gesture of holding her breasts by both hands. This type of winged and naked female deity seems to

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17 For an example on a Middle Assyrian cylinder seal, see U. Winter, *op. cit.*, fig. 171.

18 See also "the winged deity" depicted on the cylinder seals from Alalakh IV: D. Collon, *The Seal Impressions from Tell Atchana/Alalakh* (AOAT 27; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1975), pl. XX (nos. 214, 215?, 216), and from Emar: D. Beyer, *Emar IV: Les Sceaux* (OBO.SA 20; Fribourg: University Press/Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001), fig. 44: "les déesses nues" (E2a-c, E6, E9-10, E56); P. Amiet, *op. cit.*, fig. 799.

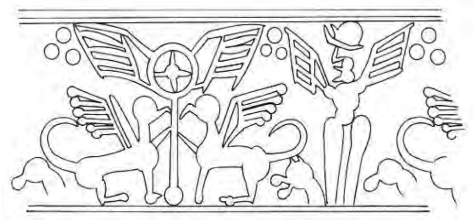
19 E. Porada, "Die Siegelzylinder-Abrollung auf der Amarna-Tafel BM 29841 im British Museum," *AfO* 25 (1974/1977), 132-142.

20 See P. Amiet, *Sceaux-cylindres en hématite et pierres diverses* (Ras Shamra-Ougarit IX; Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1982, no. 46); D. Beyer, *op. cit.*, fig. 43: "Ištar-Šaušga et les déesses ailées vêtues" (D 1, E 17 and others).

21 D. Collon, *op. cit.*, pl. XX (nos. 215, 217); P. Amiet, *Sceaux-cylindres en hématite*, no. 47.

22 See D. Beyer, *op. cit.*, fig. 43: "Ištar-Šaušga et les déesses ailées vêtues" (A 32, A 46, A 47, A 86).

23 This motif is later applied to the king, in Persian iconography in particular. See for example A. Moortgat, *Vorderasiatische Rollsiegel* (Berlin: Reimer, 1966[2]), no. 762; E. Porada, *The Collection of the Pierpont Morgan Library* (Corpus of Ancient Near Eastern Seals in North American Collections I; Washington, D.C., 1948), no. 824.



Figs. 18: D. Stein, *The Seal Impressions (Catalogue)* (Das Archiv des Silwa-teššup, H. 9; Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1993), no.15.

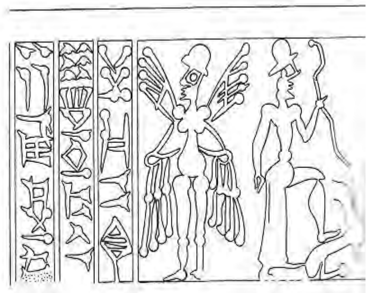


Fig. 19: Stein, *ibid*., no. 650.



Fig. 20: Stein, *ibid*., no. 307.



Fig. 21: P. Amiet, *L'art antique du Proche-Orient* (Paris: Éditions Mazenod, 1977), fig. 796.

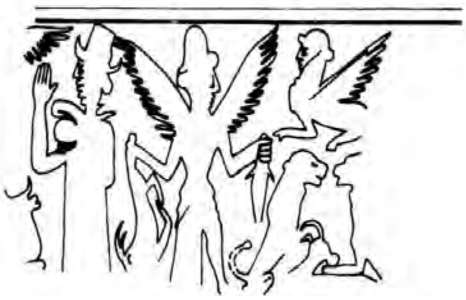


Fig. 22: D. Collon, *The Seal Impressions from Tell Atchana/Alalakh* (AOAT 27; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1975), no. 217.

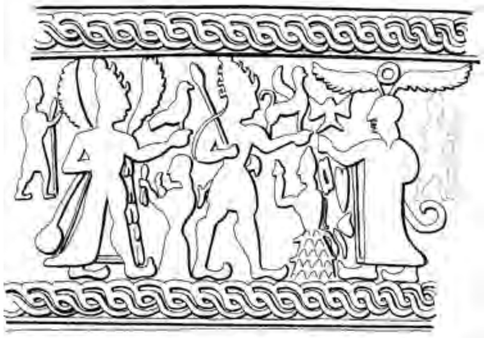


Fig. 23: D. Beyer, *Emar IV: Les Sceaux*, no. A46.



Fig. 24: P. Amiet, *L'art antique du Proche-Orient* (Paris: Éditions Mazenod, 1977), 130:1.

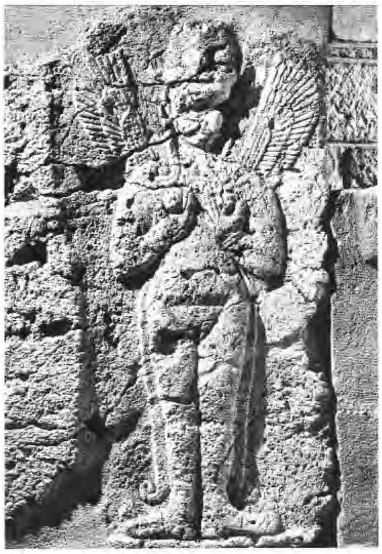


Fig. 25: K. Bittel, *Die Hethiter* (München: Beck, 1976), fig. 292.

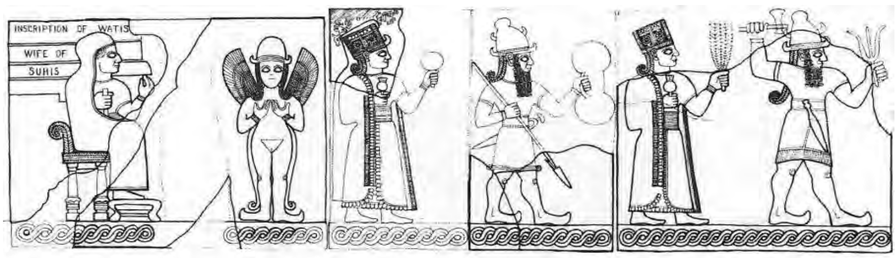


Fig. 26: G. Bunnens, *A New Luwian Stele and the Cult of the Storm God at Til Barsib-Musuwari* (Leuven: Peeters, 2005), fig. 69.



Fig. 27: V. Haas, *Geschichte der hethitischen Religion* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), fig. 66.

have been popular in the Syro-Hittite religious tradition[24] and was inherited by the first millennium BCE (Fig. 26).

In Ugarit we have a nursing scene with the Hathor-Qadesh-type goddess (Fig. 27). Since neither Hathor nor Qadesh is winged in the Egyptian tradition, the Egyptian goddess and the Syro-Hittite tradition of the winged mother goddess are amalgamated in the scene of this stela.[25] In the Ugaritic literary tradition, it is the goddess Anat who has the wings. In "Baal and Anat," a mythological text from Ugarit, we have a passage that describes Anat as a winged goddess:

tšu knp. btlt.ʿnt
tšu knp. w tr. bʿp
tk. aḫ šmk. mlat rumm

---

[24] See U. Winter, *op. cit.*, fig. 166; D. Beyer, *op. cit.*, fig. 44: Les ‹déesses nues› (E 2a-c, E 6, 9, 10, 56).

[25] For another example of the winged Hathor-Qadesh-type goddess, see U. Winter, *op. cit.*, fig. 510. The Hathor-Qadesh-type goddess is not winged in the Egyptian iconography. See K. Tazawa, *Syro-Palestinian Deities in New Kingdom Egypt* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2009), 121ff. with pls. V-VI.

Virgin Anat spread her wings,
she spread her wings, and turned her way
towards the shores of Shamak, filled with wild oxen.[26]

Nursing by a "dea nutrix," on the other hand, represents the legitimatization of the king or even of the dynasty[27] and reminds us of a passage in one of the Neo-Assyrian oracles of Ištar to Essarhaddon:

sa-ab-su-ub-ta-k[*a*] *ra-bi-tu a-na-ku*
mu-še-ni[*q*!]*-ta-ka de-iq-tú a-na-ku*

I am your (= Essarhaddon's) great midwife;
I am your excellent wet nurse.[28]

5. The First Millennium BCE

Material showing a winged goddess is relatively scarce in the first millennium BCE. Its distinctiveness is that the goddess, as we see, is mostly depicted as four-winged. From Anatolia has been found an inlay work of electrum on which a four-winged goddess stands on the mountain (Fig. 28). Because she has a bunch of grapes in each hand, she has been interpreted as the goddess of wine.

From Assyria, besides some cylinder seals,[29] we have three Neo-Assyrian carvings. The first one is an ivory fragment from Nimrud (Fig. 29).[30] To judge from the remaining part of the head, the female does not seem to be wearing a horned headdress. Her features are very similar to the second carving, one of the decorations attached to the hem of the robe of a genius carved on a Neo-Assyrian wall relief (Fig. 30).[31] This female does not wear a horned headdress either.[32] The third one, a fragmentary chip, also comes from Nimrud (Fig. 31). The horned headdress she wears indicates that she is a goddess. Though one

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[26] KTU 1.10 ii 10-12. For the translation, see N. Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 156. See also M. C. A. Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds: Ugaritic and Hebrew Descriptions of the Divine* (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1990), 544f. KTU 1.108, ob. 8 also suggests that Anat flies (*ʿnt di‹y›*).

[27] U. Winter, *op. cit.*, 473.

[28] K 4310 (= 4 R^2 61) iii 15'-18'. See S. Parpola, *Assyrian Prophecies* (SAA IX, Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1997), 7. In Ugarit, it is the goddess Asherah who is described as a wet nurse (KTU 1.15 ii 26-28).

[29] U. Winter, *op. cit.*, figs. 171-175 (all four-winged).

[30] M. Mallowan / L. G. Davies, *Ivories from Nimrud* (1949–1963) II: *Ivories in Assyrian Style* (London: The British School of Archaeology in Iraq, 1970), no. 170. A winged female figure is also carved on two ivory trapezoidal plaques. See G. Herrmann, *Ivories from Nimrud (1949–1963) IV. 1 and 2: Ivories from Room SW 37, Fort Shalmaneser* (London: The British School of Archaeology in Iraq, 1986), nos. 55f.

[31] O. E. Ravn, "Die Reliefs der assyrischen Könige, 2. Die assyrischen Reliefs in Kopenhagen," *AfO* 16 (1952/1953), 230-252 (the drawing by A. H. Layard).

[32] For the identification of the female see U. Winter, *op. cit.*, 189f. Winter interprets her as a goddess rather than a demonic being like Lilith.



Fig. 28: W. Orthmann, *Der Alte Orient* (Propyläen Kunstgeschichte 14; Berlin: Propyläen Verlag, 1975), 426c.

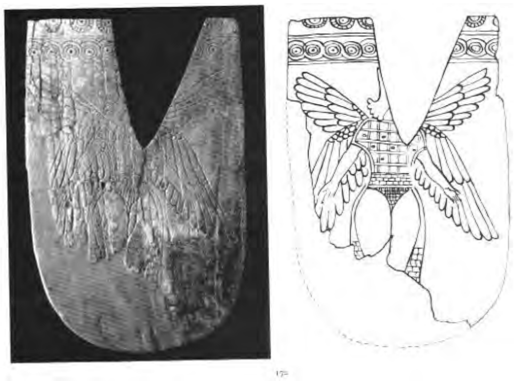


Fig. 29: M. Mallowan / L. G. Davies, *Ivories from Nimrud (1949-1963) II: Ivories in Assyrian Style* (London: The British School of Archaeology in Iraq, 1970), no. 170.

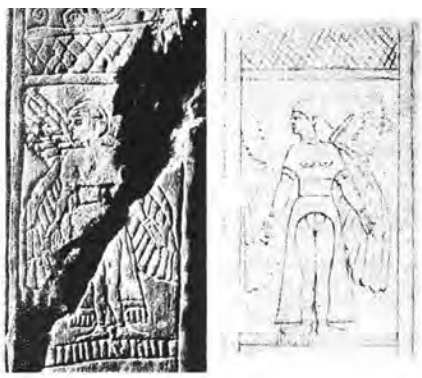


Fig. 30: O. E. Ravn, "Die Reliefs der assyrischen Könige, 2. Die assyrischen Reliefs in Kopenhagen," *AfO* 16 (1952-53), 240, Abb. 25 and 26.



Fig. 31: W. Orthmann, *op. cit.* (Propyläen Kunstgeschichte 14; Berlin: Propyläen Verlag, 1975), 263a.

cannot deny the possibility that these three four-winged females represent the winged Ištar, it would be safer to withhold final conclusion.

It is no wonder that the image of a winged female deity was transmitted further to the West. In Cyprus a couple of the stamp seals on which a kneeling four-winged female is carved have been discovered (Fig. 32).[33] A four-winged naked goddess also appears on several Northwest Semitic stamp seals.[34] Among

[33] See further T. Reyes, *The Stamp-Seals of Ancient Cyprus* (Oxford University Committe for Archaeology Monograph 52; Oxford: Oxford University School of Archaeology, 2001), nos. 306ff.

[34] N. Avigad, *Corpus of West Semitic Seals* (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Science & Hu-



Fig. 32: T. Reyes, *The Stamp-Seals of Ancient Cyprus* (Oxford University Committe for Archaeology Monograph 52; Oxford, 2011), fig. 385.



Fig. 33: N. Avigad, *Corpus of West Semitic Seals* (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Science & Humanities, 1998), no. 112.

them one finds a seal that was owned by an ancient Hebrew individual called Ga'al son of Shuʿal (Fig. 33). Ch. Uehlinger suggests that the goddess depicted on this seal should be identified with the "Queen of the Heaven" because she holds an astral staff in each hand.[35]

6. Conclusion

Having reviewed the iconographical materials of the winged goddess from the Akkad period through the first millennium BCE, we can confirm some phases in the iconographical development of the winged goddess.

The winged goddess appears first in the Akkad period. She is dressed in a slit robe and carries weapons on her back and/or in her hand. These features are inherited continuously in later periods. It is in the first half of the second millennium BCE that the winged goddess begins to show variation. The naked one appears first in Syria in this period, though not spread so widely. The winged goddess facing a standing ruler is quite popular in the Old Syrian cylinder seals, but the attributes that the goddess holds vary widely from weapons to animals or even to flowers. A winged and naked goddess has not been attested so far in the Old Assyrian and Babylonian cylinder seals. The closest images are some terracotta plaques from Mesopotamia on which a naked goddess with talons is depicted.

manities, 1998), no. 112. For other West Semitic seals on which a naked and winged goddess is depicted, see U. Winter, *op. cit.*, nos. 179f. (Syro-Phoenician seals), 181 (Neo-Babylonian seal); N. Avigad, *Corpus*, no. 791 (Aramaic).

35 Ch. Uehlinger, "Northwest Semitic Inscribed Seals: Iconography and Syro-Palestinian Religions of Iron Age II: Some Afterthoughts and Conclusions," in B. Sass and Ch. Uehlinger, eds., *Studies in the Iconography of Northwest Semitic Inscribed Seals* (OBO 125; Fribourg: University Press/Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), 276.

The winged goddess shows a greater variety in the second half of the second millennium BCE. The naked goddess becomes more popular in this period. A fish becomes one of her attributes. A dressed goddess holding a dove in her extended left hand is seen in Syro-Hittite iconography. It is also in this period that the four-winged goddess emerges in Syria. In the first millennium she becomes popular over all the Near East.

As these depictions of a winged goddess show a wide variety and each one has its own function, it is impossible to interpret all of them in the same way. Every cultural area stands on its own religious tradition. Even so, it cannot be denied that the winged feature of Inanna/Ištar, the most prominent goddess of Mesopotamia, infiltrated gradually into the peripheral regions. If we take wings as symbols of swiftness and protection, among all the deities of the time they would seem most appropriate to Ištar. In one of the bilingual hymns Ištar describes herself as being swift in movement and therefore being omnipresent.

> [mè sim.m]ušen.gim mi.ni.íb.dal.[dal]
>
> *ina ta-ha-zi ki-ma si-nun-ti at-*[*ta-nap-raš*]
>
> In battle I (= Ištar) fly around like a swallow.[36]

The protective function of Ištar's wings is also clearly stated by her in one of the Neo-Assyrian oracles given to Esarhaddon, the Assyrian king.

> *a-na-ku* AD-*ka* AMA-*ka*
> *bi-ti a-gap-pi-ia ur-ta-bi-ka*
>
> I am your father and mother.
> Between my wings I have brought you up.[37]

This kind of symbolism, in our view, is the background of YHWH's "wings," a metaphor used for His protective power in the Book of Psalms.

> Keep me as the apple of thine eye,
> Hide me in the shadow of thy wings.[38]

[36] SBH, no. 56, rev. 43f. The Sumerian word á in *ll. 17 and 27* of the Sumerian hymnal work nim.me.šár.ra was once interpreted as "(Inanna's) wings" (W. Hallo / J. J. van Dijk, *The Exaltation of Inanna* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), 16f.: "you [= Inanna] are lent wings by the storm," "Oh my lady, (propelled) on your wings, you peck away (at the land)"). A. Zgoll, however, rejects the interpretation and understands the word rather as "Kraft" (A. Zgoll, *Der Rechtsfall der En-ḫedu-Ana im Lied* nin-me-šara [AOAT 246; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1997], 18f. and 322f.).

[37] K 12033 + 82-5-22.527 iii 26'f. See S. Parpola, *op. cit.* (n. 28), 18.

[38] Ps 17:8. See further Ps 36:8, 57:2, 61:5, 63:8, 91;4. The lingering influence of the image of divine wings can be seen in the paintings (and sculptures) called "Madonna della misericordia" in the Christian artistic tradition (Fig. 34).



Fig. 34: Madonna della Misericordia (http://commons.wikimedia.org).

ʿAthtart in Late Bronze Age Syrian Texts

Mark S. SMITH

Introduction

Let me begin by noting that it is timely to examine ʿAthtart/ʿAshtart in the textual sources from Late Bronze Age Syria. Until relatively recently, scholars could note the lack of textual sources about her, for example at Ugarit.[1] However, this situation has been altered somewhat by one recent discovery from Ugarit, and by the re-edition of some other Ugaritic texts. In addition, the many texts now available from Emar have contributed to the fund of information about the goddess. This essay is the first survey of West Semitic evidence for the goddess in this period that includes the information from Emar.[2] At the same time, it is important to observe that this is a very difficult topic. I am struck by the complexity of the available sources, not only for their fragmentary character in many instances, but also for their sheer difficulty. Furthermore, the name of the goddess is highly disputed and thus offers little unambiguous help for understanding her character.[3] In addition, compared with many divinities, such as ʿAnat or Baʿal, ʿAthtart/ʿAshtart appears elusive in larger measure. It is particularly difficult to track her across

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1 See John Gray, *The Legacy of Canaan: The Ras Shamra Texts and Their Relevance to the Old Testament* (second revised ed.; VTSup 5; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1963), 176: "Beyond isolated references, however, the goddess stand definitely in the background in the Ras Shamra myths."

2 The Emar material does not appear in the 1999 article on the goddess by N. Wyatt, "Astarte," in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible* (ed. Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter van der Horst; Leiden/Boston/Köln: Brill; Grand Rapids, MI/ Cambridge, U.K.: Eerdmans, 1999), 109-14 (henceforth *DDD*).
I make no claim to expertise to sources outside the West Semitic material. For Emar material, I have relied heavily on the work of my colleague, Daniel E. Fleming, as will be clear below in the citations of his published research.

3 Proposals for the etymology of the masculine form, ʿAthtar, include: Arabic *ʿattâr*, "to be strong" (Jamme); Tigre *ʿastär*, "heaven," Geʿez *ʿastar*, "sky," Amharic *astär*, "star" (from Geʿez) and Bilin *astär*, "sky" (Leslau); *ʿtr*, "to be rich" (G. Ryckmans); Arabic *ʿattarî*, "soil artificially irrigated" (Robertson Smith, Theodore Gaster, J. Ryckmans, and J. C. de Moor). For these views, see Mark S. Smith, "The God Athtar in the Ancient Near East and His Place in KTU 1.6 I," in *Solving Riddles and Untying Knots: Biblical, Epigraphic, and Semitic Studies Presented to Jonas C. Greenfield* (ed. Ziony Zevit, Seymour Gitin and Michael Sokoloff; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1995), 636-38. The first two proposals would theoretically fit both the god and the goddess with the corresponding name.

regions in the different periods. As an old Syrian goddess known from the texts at Ebla,[4] she has a long history ranging from the third millennium down through the turn of the era.

My remarks are limited in their temporal and geographical scope, focusing on ʿAthtart at Ugarit and ʿAshtart as attested in the textual material from Emar.[5] My primary purpose is to provide the basic information about the goddess from the texts[6] at these two sites, which are located closely in both time and space. The two sites show significant overlap in information about the goddess, and at the same time each one offers significant information lacking in the other. This seems to be in due in part from ʿAthtart's combination with the goddess ʿAnat at Ugarit.[7] As a result, ʿAnat receives an emphasis in the texts at Ugarit lacking at Emar, while at Emar ʿAshtart is a major figure compared with ʿAnat.[8] Another matter to bear in mind involves the wider range of genres for the goddesses at Ugarit compared with Emar. While Emar is far richer in ritual texts, Ugarit is richer in literary texts. Thus the two sites offer some possibilities for supplementing one another in terms of information about the goddess, even as we bear in mind differences between what the two sites offer. As a result, the focus will fall on what these two sites suggest about ʿAthtart/ʿAshtart, with somewhat greater emphasis

4 For the goddess in the Ebla documents, see Francesco Pomponio and Paolo Xella, *Les dieux d'Ebla: Étude analytique des divinités éblaïtes à l'époque des archives royales du IIIe millénaire* (AOAT 245; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1997), 63-67. Her name there is spelled ^{d}*aš-dar*, without the final feminine *-t* characteristic of her name in later texts known from Ugarit and Emar. Her name is attested in an Emar PN, *aštarti-'ila*; see Regine Pruzsinszky, *Die Personnenamen der Text aus Emar* (Studies on the Civilization and Culture of Nuzi and the Hurrians 13; Bethesda, MD: CDL Press, 2003), 192. As recognized by Alan Cooper, the form of the name **'aštartu* is reflected also in the Alalakh personal name, **aštartu* (D. J. Wiseman, *The Alalakh Tablets* [London: British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara, 1953] 130, #235:4), and in Akkadian spellings of the place **ashtartu* in EA 197:10 and 256:21. See A. Cooper, "A Note on the Vocalization of עַשְׁתֹּרֶת," *ZAW* 102 (1990), 98-100.

5 Textual material from earlier Bronze Age Syrian sites such as Ebla and Mari is not addressed except in passing.

6 There are some remarks on the iconography thought to be associated with the goddess, but this material is treated only in brief. For a complete survey, see the essay by Izak Cornelius, "'Revisiting' Astarte in the iconography of the Bronze Age Period Canaan/Syro-Palestine," in this volume.

7 The idea of the two goddesses as a pair is fairly standard. For an example, see Johannes C. de Moor, *An Anthology of Religious Texts* (Nisaba 16; Leiden: Brill, 1987), 188 n. 5. He also refers to ʿAnat as the double of ʿAthart and vice-versa (pp. 30 n. 132, 33 n. 147, 43 and 148 n. 10). See below for further discussion.

8 The early survey of deities in the Emar texts by Gary Beckman does not include Anat. See Beckman, "The Pantheon of Emar," in *Silva Anatolica: Anatolian Studies presented to Maciej Popko on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday* (Warsaw: Agade, 2002), 39-54. The place-name of Anat has been read in Emar 26:7 and 14 by S. Basetti, "Anat in a Text from Emar," in *Studies on the Civilization and Culture of Nuzi and the Hurrians. Volume 8: Richard F. S. Starr Memorial Volume* (ed. David L. Owen and Gernot Wilhelm; Bethesda, MD: CDL Press, 1996), 245-46.

given to the Ugarit material. This survey will not entirely preclude some references to the goddess in other material, such as Egypt, or other Levantine sources, when they are relevant to the Late Bronze information for the goddess. It is my hope that such a survey of material may also be of help for understanding the biblical references to the goddess or her name,[9] which I will mention briefly at the end of the final section of this study. I would add that I hold no illusions as to the provisional nature of this survey, in view of the number and distribution of sources in the Levant as a whole, both northern and south,[10] not to mention further east or west.

There are two further related limitations or dangers in such a study. The first involves generalizations about the deity, which is a knotty issue. On the one hand, an absence of evidence is hardly evidence of absence, as it is commonly stated. On the other hand, generalizations are not always clearly warranted and may obscure variations in different periods and places. To illustrate the issue, we may take an example relevant to our topic. It is assumed, with some reason, that ʿAthtart is identified as the evening star corresponding to ʿAthtar as the morning star. William Foxwell Albright stated this view rather straightforwardly: "the name ʿAthtart was always connected with the evening star, just as ʿAthtar (the corresponding masculine name) was always connected with the morning star all over the West Semitic world from Syria to South Arabia. The ancients early became aware of the fact that evening and morning star were simply manifestations of the same entity – since they saw that the two have the same magnitude and never appear together, yet always in related positions in the heavens."[11]Albright's reasoning proceeds in part from reasonable analogies with two other deities, both of whose names are etymologically related. As Albright's comments show, one analogy is with her apparent, masculine West Semitic astral counterpart ʿAthtar[12]; for other writers, the other analogy is with Ishtar, her apparent female counterpart in Mesopotamia. Since both ʿAthtar and Ishtar display an astral character,[13] it seems only reasonable that ʿAthtart would as well. The

[9] For biblical questions, see the contributions of Stéphanie Anthonioz and David T. Sugimoto to this volume.

[10] This issue is raised in a critical way by Noga Ayali-Darshan, "'The Bride of the Sea': The Traditions about Astarte and Yamm in the Ancient Near East," in *A Woman of Valor: Jerusalem Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Honor of Joan Goodnick Westenholz* (ed. W. Horowitz, U. Gabbay, F. Vukosavovic; Biblioteca del Proximo Oriente Antiguo 8; Madrid: C.S.I.C., 2010), 19-33.

[11] Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan: A Historical Analysis of Two Contrasting Faiths* (reprinted edition; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1968), 134.

[12] For this god, see the older survey of Smith, "The God Athtar in the Ancient Near East," 627-40. A more systematic survey of this god remains a desideratum.

[13] See ^{d}*Aš-tar* mul in Emar 378:39'. Emar texts are cited according to the text numbers of Daniel Arnaud, *Recherches au pays d'Aštata*. *Emar VI, tome 3: Texts sumériens et accadiens* (Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1986); noted in Smith, "The God Athtar," 629.

Note also KTU 1.111:15-22. In this text, a bride-price is paid to the lunar deity Ib, as Den-

early situation for understanding the three deities is unclear. Ishtar is often read as Ashtar in early Mesopotamian texts (such as Mari); they are the same figure in these instances.[14] This is also the basis for Ebla Ashtar as feminine.[15] Moreover, there is a related problem in the series of associations with ʿAthtar as her apparent counterpart. Whatever their etymological connection and possible older relationship, their association is not presently attested at Ugarit or Emar.

In his view of Athtart, Albright was hardly alone. The information that he noted is repeated elsewhere, for example by J. J. M. Roberts in his 1972 book, *The Earliest Semitic Pantheon*,[16] and by N. Wyatt in his contribution to the standard resource, *Dictionary of Deities and Demons*.[17] Despite this trend in scholarship, it is notable that neither Albright nor other scholars cite any clear West Semitic astral evidence for ʿAthtart/ʿAshtart. Given how much ʿAthtart is associated there with other deities, it may appear surprising that she is not associated with ʿAthtar if this association was significant in Uga-

nis Pardee comments, "apparently in view of her marriage to ʿAṯtaru Šadî, probably an astral-deity on the pattern of other manifestations of ʿAṯtar(t)u." See Pardee, *Ritual and Cult at Ugarit* (ed. Theodore J. Lewis; Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002), 90 (henceforth *RCU*). For ʿAthtar as an astral god in south Arabian sources, see A. Jamme, "La religion arabe pré-islamique," in *Histoire des religions* 4 (1956), 265-65, 276-78. The etymology of the name is highly debated; see Jamme, "la religion arabe," 265; and Smith, "The God Athtar," 636-38. See also Jamme's earlier and copiously documented study, "Le panthéon sud-arabe préislamique d'après les sources épigraphiques," *Le Muséon* 60 (1947), 57-147, esp. 88 and 100. For an accessible example of Athtar in Sabean sources, see *ANET*, 663 and n. 5 (where Jamme calls Athtar "a star-god") and in Minaean sources, see *ANET*, 666 and n. 5 (where his name appears with Sharqân, an "epithet characterizing the star-god as 'the eastern'"). For some doubts about this view of the god, see Jacques Ryckmans, "South Arabia, Religion," *ABD* VI:172; and Alexander Sima, "Religion," in *Queen of Sheba: Treasures from Ancient Yemen* (ed. St John Simpson; London: The British Museum Press, 2002), 163. The evidence cited for Athtar's astral character is based largely on the title *ʿṯtr šrqn*. The noun **šrq* refers to the rising of a star or sunrise (based on Arabic *šaraqa* with these meanings). The Sabaean noun also means "east, eastern land." For this information, see Joan Copeland Biella, *Dictionary of Old South Arabic: Sabaean Dialect* (HSS 25; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982), 528.

14 The West Semitic differentiation of a masculine form in addition to the feminine form of the deity remains intriguing. Relative to the feminine form at Ebla, Mari and Mesopotamia more broadly, the masculine form looks like a secondary development. My thanks go to my colleague, Daniel E. Fleming, for help on this point.

15 See n. 5 above.

16 Roberts, *The Earliest Semitic Pantheon: A Study of Semitic Deities Attested in Mesopotamia before Ur III* (Baltimore/London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972), 37-40, and 101 n. 285.

17 See Wyatt, "Astarte," *DDD* 110 citing W. Heimpel, "A Catalogue of Near Eastern Venus Deities," *Syro-Mesopotamian Studies* 4 (1982), 13-14. Note the response to Heimpel by Brigitte Groneberg, "Die sumerisch-akkadische Inanna-Ištar: Hermaphroditos?" *WO* 17 (1986), 25-46. Note also Michael L. Barré, *The God-List in the Treaty between Hannibal and Philip V of Macedonia: A Study in Light of the Ancient Near Eastern Treaty Tradition* (Baltimore/London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983), 54 and 167 n. 131, citing D. O. Edzard, *WdM*, 84.

ritic society or culture.[18] The comparative material is likewise not without its difficulties. (One might speculate that if ʿAthtar is a masculine differentiation from the goddess by the same name, then perhaps some of the features of the god differed as well.[19]) Albright's generalization for an astral ʿAthtart, as he wrote, "all over the West Semitic world" is highly disproportionate to the evidence. In sum, many of the pieces of information in the discussions by Albright and other scholars may well be right, but no clear West Semitic evidence for an astral ʿAthtart in particular appears in these treatments.[20] This does not mean that it was not so, as we cannot assume that the texts recovered are fully representative.[21]

What we can say, and what is constructive for our purposes in our quest to understand ʿAthtart/ʿAshtart, is that for the presentations of the goddess in the texts that we do have, any putative astral aspect was not of particular importance. The sources do not emphasize this side of the goddess; in fact, what sources we do have do not mention or allude to this aspect of her as far as we can tell. As already noted, it is also debated whether or not her name refers to an astral character of hers. So a description that we might provide based on the presently attested texts may reflect the relative priorities about the goddess by those who produced and transmitted these attested texts. In other words, the textual representation of the goddess is hardly a source of an objective or general description of the goddess, but may form a kind of statement about how the goddess fits into the societies that produced the texts as presently attested. (Of course, the discovery of a new text or a few new texts could alter the view of the situation.) More broadly, I want to raise a question about a comparative methodology that focuses as much on etymology as on content. It seems that the former approach assumes an undemonstrated generalization as well as a fairly static picture that is not particularly attuned

18 The closest we seem to get involves the emblem animal for the god and goddess. It is to be noted that both ʿAthtar and ʿAthtart are characterized in leonine language in Ugaritic. See below for ʿAthtart as the lioness." For ʿAthtar apparently as a lion, see KTU 1.2 III 20 and 1.24:30.

19 If some sort of secondary construction of the god was involved (see n. 12), might the astral aspect also be secondary not only to the god, but also the goddess? Again, my thanks go to Daniel Fleming for his comments on this matter

20 The astral assumption was questioned in some older studies. See Roberts, *The Earliest Semitic Pantheon*, 101 n. 285. The title, "Queen of Heaven," known for ʿAthtart in Egyptian sources need not denote a specifically astral aspect, though it may. For this Egyptian information, see W. Herrmann, "Aštart," *MIO* 15 (1969), 51, noted by Roberts, *The Earliest Semitic Pantheon*, 101 n. 285.

21 RS 92.2016 contains several instances of *kbkb* + DN, none of which are ʿAthtar or ʿAthtart (but see the lacuna in line 12). For the text, see André Caquot and Anne-Sophie Dalix, "Un texte mythico-magique," in *Études ougaritiques: I. Travaux 1985-1995* (ed. Marguerite Yon and Daniel Arnaud; RSO XIV; Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 2001), 393-405, esp. pp. 393, 400; Mark S. Smith and Wayne T. Pitard. *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle. Volume 2: Introduction with Text, Translation and Commentary of KTU 1.3-1.4* (VTSup 114; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 232-33; cf. Johannes C. de Moor, "How Ilimilku Lost His Master (RS 92.2016)," *UF* 40 (2008), 179-89.

to possibilities of regional and temporal variation and change. Such an approach runs a risk of adversely affecting the attested evidence at a single site, or in the case of this study, two sites.

The second limitation concerns the intersection between the societies and the goddess. Generally, modern descriptions of deities tend to survey the literary representations of the goddess and to generalize about her character or profile based on these representations. To some degree, this is a necessary and even useful procedure, but it suffers from the limitations of literary texts, which do not address a range of issues: how was the goddess perceived in different social levels and segments? Did she vary according to various religious and political settings? How did people relate to her? How (if at all) was she understood to be manifest to people? These and – I think – other questions could be raised. Most, if not all, of them cannot be answered at least adequately, but as an initial inoculation against generalizing and abstracting some kind of nature of the goddess, it may be helpful to include information from more mundane genres with data along with the more traditionally championed genre of literary texts. As noted above, the texts from Ugarit and Emar are not balanced in terms of genre. And so any consideration of the two corpora in tandem would do well to proceed with some attention to genre.

With these initial considerations in mind, we may proceed to look at texts bearing on the goddess at Ugarit and Emar, with some reference to sources elsewhere in Syria. The discussion will proceed in five parts: (1) religion and cult devoted to the goddess and her relative importance; (2) the goddess as a figure of hunting and warfare; (3) the goddess' relations to other deities; (4) the goddess' attribute animal; and (5) ʿAthtart's contacts with goddesses of other regions.

1. The Goddess in Cultic Texts and Her Importance

At Ugarit the goddess appears in several administrative and ritual texts. Together these texts suggest at least some importance of the goddess to the monarchy. Such a picture can be gleaned from administrative and ritual texts. These texts were largely produced for and by the monarchy and thus reflect the goddess' place in the royal scheme of things. How she was understood in other sectors of society is unknown, although it might be argued that the monarchic version of the goddess reflects at least in part how she was understood at least somewhat more broadly.

KTU 4.219:2 records a payment of silver for the house of ʿAthtart immediately preceding payment for the house of Resheph-*gn* in line 3. David M. Clements comments: "The recurrent emphasis upon ʿAṯtartu in a wide range of documents from PR [Palais Royal] indicates the significance of this deity to the Ugaritic Dynasty and its administration. This suggests (though by no means conclusively) that it [the temple] was situated in the vicinity of Ugarit

if not within the palace complex itself."[22] Another sanctuary, which seems to belong to ʿAthtart/Ishtar is mentioned in an Akkadian text from Ugarit, RS 17.22 + 17.87:21-23[23]:

bītu ku-na-ḫi	...the *kunaḫi*-house
ša *ilištar*	of Ishtar;
ù qa-di-iš a-n[*a* *il2ištar(?)*]	it is (to be?) sacred to [Ishtar]
ù ṣa-mi-id [*ana?*il]*ištar*	and transferred [to ?] Ishtar.

In addition to a temple, Ugaritic administrative material shows cultic personnel devoted to the goddess. KTU 4.168:3-4 refers to a record of *ḫpn* for the singer(s) of ʿAthtart.[24] An Akkadian text from Ugarit, RS 20.235:17-18, mentions a servant of the goddess[25]:

*alpû*H *qa-du* *amil*rê*'i*	des boeufs ainsi que (leur),
*amil*arad *il*ištar	serviteur d'Ishtar[26]

The name of the goddess is read as ʿAthtart by Silvie Lackenbacher.

Clothing for the goddess' cult statue in two administrative texts. Clothing for the goddess, that is her statue, is attested in KTU 4.245 I 1 and 11. The tablet's heading in line 1 reads: "re[co]rd of the clothing of ʿAthtart" (*s*[*p*]*r md ʿṯtrt*). In line 11, a second section opens after being marked off by a scribal line: *md ʿṯtrt*. According to KTU 4.182:55, 58 (with correction), it would appear that she receives clothing: *mdth*[ ]*ʿṯtrt šd*, "her clothing" for the statue of "ʿAthtart *šd*."[27] The epithet seems to mean, "field" or "steppe-land," which may represent the location of a sanctuary from which the goddess comes in the royal entry ritual in KTU 1.91:10.[28] This documents a record of wine used up in the royal rituals: "When Athtart *šd* enters the house of the king."

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22 Clemens, *Sources for Ugaritic Ritual and Sacrifice* (AOAT 284/1; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2001), 380-81, cited in Theodore J. Lewis, "ʿAthtartu's Incantations," *JNES* (in press), n. 98.

23 *Ugaritica V*, 9; John Huehnergard, *Ugaritic Vocabulary in Syllabic Transcription: Revised Edition* (HSS 32; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2008), 145; Silvie Lackenbacher, *Textes akkadiens d'Ugarit: Textes provenant des vingt-cinq premières campganes* (LAPO 20; Paris: Cerf, 2002), 254 (largely followed here).

24 See Matahisa Koitabashi, "Music in the Texts from Ugarit," *UF* 30 (1998), 363-96, esp. 366.

25 *Ugaritica V*, p. 178-79; Lackenbacher, *Textes akkadiens*, 279.

26 Arnaud, *Textes syriens*, #44, p. 84: "servant of Ishtar" PN son of PN, ìr dIš$_8$-tár.

27 Her title here, ʿAthtart *šd*, attested also in the ritual texts, e.g., KTU 1.111:8-10, seems to relate to Ishtar *ṣēri* (e.g., RS 17.352, PRU IV, p. 121). See discussion of Nougayrol, *Ugaritica V*, 56; Lackenbacher, *Textes akkadiens*, 107 n. 330. For ʿAthtar *šd* in 1.111.18-10, see *RCU*, 92-93.

28 So see the discussion of this possibility in *RCU* 70; on entry ritual, see also Gregorio del Olmo Lete, *Canaanite Religion according to the Liturgical Texts of Ugarit* (trans. Wilfred G. E. Watson; Bethesda, MD: CDL Press, 1999), 136, 291.

A ritual text, KTU 1.148:18, marks new section similarly: "When ʿAthtart *šd* enters the house of the king."[29] This title would seem to fit with her hunting in KTU 1.114, as we will note below. For now, the important feature to be noted is the goddess's entry into the royal palace, once again suggesting of the royal attention paid to her.

Other ritual texts provide little or no information on the material nature of the goddess' cult. Instead, there is more reference to the nature of the goddess herself. For example, KTU 1.50:1, 3, 4 represent three evident references to ʿAthtart, all partially reconstructed and all with room following for possible epithets added. Might this text suggest acknowledgment of the different manifestations of Athtart? Similarly, KTU 1.81:18, 19 refers, respectively, to *ʿṯtrt ndrg* and *ʿṯtrt abḏr*, but it is difficult to know the significance of these references. No less intriguing, the former is preceded by *qdšt*, "the Holy One" (feminine). The context with ʿAthtart in a ritual offering context suggests the title of a goddess for *qdšt*,[30] and perhaps the closest analogue that can be found to Egyptian Qedeshet.[31] Other ritual contexts likewise mention the goddess. KTU 1.112:13 refers to an offering of a jar[32] of wine for ʿAthtart *ḫr*, a title to which we shall return below.

ʿAthtart is known additionally from three incantational texts. Two involve incantations against snakebites, KTU 1.100:20 and 78, and 1.107:39. The first occurs in a larger sequence of instructions, each one addressed by the speaker, "the mother of the stallion, the mare" to Shapshu, said to be "her mother." Shapshu is to take a message to a succession of deities. KTU 1.100:20 represents one listing among many for deities: *ʿnt w{.}*[[*x*]] *ṯtrt ỉnbbh*, "Anat and ʿAthtart at Inbb." What is special about ʿAthtart in this instance is that her name is combined with Anat's. While there are doubled-barreled names of other deities, there is no listing that gives two deities as such (which is probably the reason why Pardee translates "ʿAnatu-wa-ʿAthtartu" as if it were a single name).[33] The destination is Anat's home at Inbb and not Athtart's; it seems that not only that a pairing of the two goddesses is involved, but that relative to Anat, ʿAthtart here is secondary to her. Is ʿAthtart here part of a fuller expression of the identity of ʿAnat at Inbb, or is she added here to fit her into the lager scheme of the text? In the same text, in KTU 1.100:77-79, her name appears in a scribal instruction: "After Reshep, (add) ʿAthtart, (namely) ʿto ʿAthtart at Mari, my incantation for a snake-biteʾ." As this instruction indicates, these lines 77-79, which are written on the side of the tablet, were meant to be read with the full formulary as the other entries, and would be read after line 34 and before line 35, which

[29] Del Olmo Lete (*Canaanite Religion*, 261) understands 1.91.10 as part of a list of rituals, with line 10 referring to 1.148.18-22.

[30] *DULAT* 697.

[31] See Qedeshet in the contribution of Keiko Tazawa to this volume.

[32] *RCU* 37 reading *kd*; cf. KTU *k{b}d*.

[33] *RCU* 175.

begins the next section.[34] It seems that ʿAthtart may have been a bit of an afterthought in lines 20 and 78. The first instance involves ʿAthtart of Ugarit, while in the second, "ʿAthtart at Mari" would seem to point in the direction of the figure of ʿAthtart as well known at Mari (^{d}*aštarrat*). We will return to this figure in the final section of this study.

The second of the two snakebite incantations also lists ʿAnat and ʿAthtart in a pairing. Here it is more explicitly the case. In KTU 1.107:39, the wish is expressed: "May ʿAnat and ʿAthtart gather the venom." This wish follows the same wish for [Baʿal?] and Dagan, and it precedes the same wish made of Yarih and Resheph. The wishes are all structured here in the form of pairs. While the reason for each pairing may not be obvious, it is hardly surprising for ʿAnat and ʿAthtart. It is to be noted that once again ʿAnat precedes ʿAthtart in the pairing.

The third incantational text is RS 92.2016.[35] This is a difficult text (lines 2-21), one directed against fever or for good childbirth: "the secret of Baʿal" (lines 16', 20' and probably 21') seems to be for the healing of sickness or safe delivery of a newborn. Line 18' mentions *⌜n⌝ḫ̮l ʿṯtrt b rḥbn*, "the torrent of ʿAthtart, in the Rahban." The latter is identified with a local river at Ugarit, the Nehr el-Kebir. The immediate context for line 18 are *bʿl qdšm bnhr*, "Baʿal (and) the holy ones in the river" (?) in line 17', and *bym*, "in the sea," in line 19'. The context suggests three bodies of water in lines 17'-19', but what more can be added about ʿAthtart here is difficult to say, given the condition of the text.

The deities-lists and letters give a different sense of the goddess' importance at Ugarit. On the one hand, the deities-lists seem to show her in a position of relative unimportance. In KTU 1.148:7, an offering list to deities, ʿAthtart appears in a group of goddesses, as she does in the deities-lists, 1.47:25 and 1.118:24. In these lists she appears as the last goddess in the groups. Indeed, if the order is any indication, the "ritual ʿAthtart" is not particularly important. On the other hand, the "political ʿAthtart" in the letters seems to be a different story. It is difficult to ascertain the relative importance of goddesses at Ugarit, compared with at least some of the gods. However, we may note in this regard the list of deities in the Ugaritic letter, 2.42:6-9[36]:

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[34] See *RCU*, 188 n. 40. Note also the observation of William W. Hallo, "Haplographic Marginalia," in *Essays on the Ancient Near East in Memory of Jacob Joel Finkelstein* (ed. Maria de Jong Ellis; Memoirs of the Connecticut Academy of Arts & Sciences XIX; Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1977), 101-3: "A minor difficulty with this interpretation (from the point of view of Mesopotamian scribal usage) is only that the insertion seems to be placed physically *before* the stanza on Resheph!" (Hallo's italics).

[35] See André Caquot and Anne-Sophie Dalix, "Un texte mythico-magique," in *Études ougaritiques: I. Travaux 1985-1995* (ed. Marguerite Yon and Daniel Arnaud; RSO XIV; Paris: Editions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 2001), 393-405, esp. pp. 393, 400; Smith and Pitard, *Ugaritic Baal Cycle. Volume* II, 232-33; cf. Johannes C. de Moor, "How Ilimilku Lost His Master (RS 92.2016)," *UF* 40 (2008), 179-89.

[36] For text and translation, see Dennis Pardee, "Epigraphic and Philological Notes," *UF* 19

"I do indeed speak to Baʿal Sapun (?),[37]...to the Eternal Sun, to ʿAthtart..., to Anat, to all the gods of Alishi[ya]...".[38] The letter is addressed to the king

(1987) 204-9, esp. 205; and in *The Context of Scripture* (ed. William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger, Jr.; 3 vols.; Leiden/Boston/Köln: Brill, 2002) 3.104 (henceforth *COS*).

37 There is a question about the reading. KTU reads: *bʿl ṣp*[*n*]. A. Bernard Knapp has *bʿly x* and translates "Baʿal". See Knapp, "An Alashiysan Merchant at Ugarit," *Tel Aviv* 10 (1983), 39 and 40. Following Mario Liverani, Pardee ("Epigraphic and Philological Notes," 206-7) would see Baʿal Ṣpn here.

38 The list continues with *nmry mlk ʿlm*, which has been thought to continue the list of divine names. For different views of *nmry mlk ʿlm* that follows the mention of deities, see *DULAT* 632 and Itamar Singer, "A Political History of Ugarit," in *Handbook of Ugaritic Studies* (ed. Wilfred G. E. Watson and Nicolas Wyatt; HdO I/39; Leiden/Boston/Köln: Brill, 1999), 678.

In the *editio princeps* (RS 18.113A in *PRU V*, p. 15), Virolleaud suggested that *nmry* was a title of Amenophis III. Erno Gaál amplified this proposal that *nmry* is an Egyptian title *Nb-m3ʿt-Rʿ*, aka Amenophis III, in suggesting that *mlk ʿlm* here is a royal title corresponding to Egyptian *ḥḳ3 ḏ.t*, "lord of eternity," commonly used for Osiris, but also used for the deceased Amenophis III adored as Osiris. See Gaál, "Osiris-Amenophis III in Ugarit," in *Studia Aegyptiaca I. Recueil d'études dediées à Vilmos Wessetzky à l'occasion de son 65e anniversaire (*Budapest: Chaires d'Histoire Ancienne, 1974) 97-99, cited by Alan Cooper, "*MLK ʿLM*: 'Eternal King' or "King of Eternity'," in *Love & Death in the Ancient Near East: Essays in Honor of Marvin H. Pope* (ed. John H. Marks and Robert M. Good; Guilford, CT: Four Quarters Publishing Company, 1987) 2. The same title *mlk ʿlm* was noted for *Rpů mlk ʿlm* in KTU 1.108:1, 21-22, the eponymous head of the deceased, tribal heroes known as the Rephaim.

Singer prefers to see *nmry mlk ʿlm* in KTU 2.42:9 as an appelative for "the supreme god" of Alashiya. Following Anson F. Rainey ("The Ugaritic Texts in *Ugaritica V*," *JAOS* 94 [1974] 188), Singer relates the title *nmry* to **mrr*, "to strengthen, bless," and thus the title would mean "blessed/strong one."

Pardee (*COS* 3.104) sees *nmry mlk ʿlm* as a reference to the Ugaritic king and renders, "the splendor of (your) eternal kingship." Pardee compares **nmrt* in KTU 1.108:23, 25. In this case, final -y in *nmry* and final -t in *nmrt* would be variant feminine endings (cf. *brky* and *brkt* in parallel texts, 1.5 I 16 and 1.133.6). This view has also been taken up also by Jean-Marie Durand, "Le mythologème du combat du dieu de l'Orage contre la Mer," *MARI* 7 (1993), 41-61, esp. 53-54, and *Les documents épistolaires du palais de Mari: Tome III* (LAPO 18; Paris: Cerf, 2000) 84 n. a (reference courtesy of Aaron Tugendhaft).

If one works with Pardee's view of the word's meaning and its application to the Ugaritic king (as well as the comparison of *nmry* in KTU 2.42:9 with **nmrt* in KTU 1.108:23, 2), then the features shared by these two texts may point up a particular connotation of *nmry mlk ʿlm* in KTU 2.42:9. As Pardee notes, the word **nmrt* in KTU 1.108:23 and 25 occurs in the context of a blessing for the king invoking *Rpů* called *mlk ʿlm*, the very same expression to which *nmry* stands in construct in 2.42:9. Given these similarities, it might be pursued whether *nmry* in 2.42:9 may be an Ugaritic interpretation of the Egyptian title in its association with the god of the underworld. In other words, in KTU 2.42:6-9 the human Ugaritic king (as suggested by Pardee) is being blessed by his official with wishes of splendorous eternal kingship, which in Egypt would have been associated with Osiris, but at Ugarit were associated with *Rpů mlk ʿlm* as in KTU 1.108:1, 21-22 (per Gaál and Cooper). Thus the king is being blessed to be the living, human royal embodiment of kingship represented in the divine realm by his divine counterpart, *Rpů mlk ʿlm*.

Accordingly, one might entertain the possibility that *rpů mlk ʿlm* in KTU 1.108:1 might not be "Rapiu the eternal king," as the phrase is generally taken, but as "the Rapiu, Milku, the eternal one." According to Alfonso Archi, the listing of the god after Nergal in the

(line 1), presumably of Ugarit, and in line 3 the sender is called *rb mỉ*[, "chief of...(?)." From the list of deities, it might be supposed that it was sent by a high-ranking official of Ugarit[39] from Alashiya and from the mention of the "ship(s)" (*ả*nyt) in lines 24 and 26 and "merchant" (*mkr*) in line 25, it might be supposed that the letter concerns maritime commerce between Alishiya and Ugarit. Accordingly, the letter would represent a recognition of the deities of the two lands, with Baʿal in initial position and with ʿAthtart in the initial position for Ugaritic goddesses. She is positioned before Anat. (The older generation of deities, such as El and Athirat, do not receive this sort of acknowledgement in the corpus of Ugaritic letters.) Thus this text may furnish some sense of the political recognition of the goddess. At the same time, some caution may be urged, as the name of the goddess does not show up in any other KTU letters.[40]

There is one final piece of evidence that arguably points to the relative importance of the goddess at Ugarit. It has been noted that ʿAthtart *šd*, "Athtart of the field" (KTU 1.91:10; 1.148:18; 4.182:55, 58), which will be addressed below, has a syllabic counterpart in the name, *ištar ṣēru*, "Ishtar of the steppe land" in RS 17.352:12,[41] as noted by Pardee.[42] This particular instance points to the goddess' importance at Ugarit as the divine name appears in an inter-

Anatolian rituals in Emar 472:62, 473:15 points to Milku "as a god of similar qualities, whom they [the Hittites] had acquired from Syria." Mlk is known also at Emar ("the seven [d]Im-li-ku of the seven gates" in Emar 373:124 and 378:41). Milku is also an Amurrite god as attested in the Hittite treaty of Murshili II with Tuppi-Teshub of Amurru listing [d]*Mi-*il_5*-ku* [KUR [uru]*A-mur*]*-ri*, either Milku of Amurru or the Milku's of Amurru. See Alfonso Archi, "Kizzuwatna amid Anatolian and Syrian Cults," in *Anatolia Antica: Studi in memoria di Fiorelli Imparati* (ed. Stefano de Martino and Franca Pecchioli Daddi; Firenze: LoGisma editore, 2002), 50.

Two grammatical notes concerning KTU 2.42:6-9: Durand accepts the etymology suggested by Rainey and followed by Singer, but Pardee does not (*Les textes mythologiques de la 24*[e] *campagne 1961* [Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1988] 115; *COS* 1.104 n. 126). Instead, *nmry*/*nmrt* seems to derive from ultimately middle weak (see *AHw*, 768), reformed as **nmr* (cf. Ugaritic *ndd* and Akkadian *nazāzu* as deriving from the *N*-stem of **ḏwḏ*; *DULAT*, 620).

The verb-object syntax for KTU 2.42:6-9 proposed by Pardee is perhaps a bit uncertain, as suggested by the material supplied parenthetically: "I do pronounce to DNs (prayers for) the splendor of (your) eternal kingship." I have nothing better to propose, however. Further in its defense, the overall view suggested by Pardee fits the epistolary genre, as the common blessings formulas invoking the gods does not appear otherwise in this letter.

39 Following one of the suggestions made by Virolleaud in the *editio princeps*, Dennis Pardee reasonably suggests reconstructing *rb mỉ*[*ḫd*], "Chief of Ma'[ḫadu]," the port town of the kingdom of Ugarit, today Minet el-Beidha. See Pardee, *COS* 3.104 n. 125.

40 I add the qualification "KTU letters," as further letters are in the process of being published by Dennis Pardee.

41 PRU IV, p. 121.

42 *RCU* 275; and see also above. In this connection, one might compare possible male corresponding figures in Ugaritic: Athtar *šd* (1.111.19-20, as read by *RCU* 92-93; cf. KTU Athtar *šb*) and perhaps the very difficult line, *ỉl šdy ṣd mlk* in 1.108.12. Pardee (*RCU* 205-6 n. 13) also discusses the possible relationship of this line with BH *ʾēl šadday*.

national context involving the kings of Carchemish and Ugarit. The "oath" (*māmīta*) represented in this decree between the parties is "before Ishtar of the steppe-land." Here the goddess serves as the one divine witness to the decree and its terms. One might be tempted to see this mention as a matter of the goddess as the divine patron of the queen Ahatmilku, who is named earlier in the text (line 7), but this would exceed the evidence. Whether or not this is the case, it is the case that this international context is suggestive of her importance within royal circles at Ugarit. The Akkadian milieu for this international dossier of materials also suggests viewing the goddess recognized across the various lands involved in this decree, perhaps with little distinction being made in this context between ʿAthtart/ʿAshtar/Ishtar.

At Emar ʿAshtart is a significant goddess. She is the recipient of not only major cult (e.g., Emar 370, 460),[43] but also a major temple on Emar's highest point (Emar 42, 43, 45, 52).[44] The importance of the goddess may be gauged also by Emar 43:1, with its reference to the treasure of ʿAshtart of the city (Emar 265:11, ^{d}*Inanna* URU.KI).[45]

To put the goddess in the larger context at Emar, we may note the view of Daniel E. Fleming on the major deities. He notes the central importance of Dagan.[46] Fleming also deduces that the important pair of local deities would have been the storm-god and the north Syrian Hurrian Hebat, which he calls "the nearer Aleppo pairing," in contrast to Baʿal and ʿAshtart, which he would understand as "a distinctively Levantine (perhaps "Canaanite") combination."[47] For the pairing of Baʿal and ʿAshtart, Fleming notes that

[43] Daniel E. Fleming, *The Installation of Baal's High Priestess at Emar* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1992), 99: "*Aštartu tāḫāzi* is one of the major gods of the Emar cult" (lege: "deities").

[44] Fleming, *The Installation of Baal's High Priestess at Emar,* 216-21.

[45] Note also Westenholz #25:8-18 lists the "Ornamentation of ʿAštar(t)-*ḫaši*," the divine name found also in the colophon in Emar 767:26; see Joan Goodnick Westenholz, *Cuneiform Inscriptions in the Collection of the Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem: The Emar Tablets* (Cuneiform Monographs 13; Groningen: Styx Publications, 2000), 64-65. On this form of the goddess, see Westenholz's comments on p. 65. For the colophon, see Daniel Arnaud, *Recherches au pays d'Aštata. Emar VI.4: Textes de la bibliothèque, transcriptions et traductions* (Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1987), 362. Westenholz suggests geographical candidates for *ḫaši*.

[46] See Fleming, *The Installation of Baal's High Priestess at Emar*, 240-47, and *Time at Emar: The Cultic Calendar and the Rituals from the Diviner's Archive* (Mesopotamian Civilizations 11; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2000), 49, 98. See also L. Feliu, *The God Dagan in Bronze Age Syria* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2003); and A. Otto**,** "Das Oberhaupt des westsemitischen Pantheons ohne Abbild? Überlegungen zur Darstellung des Gottes Dagan," *ZA* 96 (2006), 242-68.

[47] Fleming, "'The Storm God of Canaan' at Emar," *UF* 26 (1994), 130; see also *The Installation of Baal's High Priestess at Emar*, 76 and 222-25 (on the Storm-god and Hebat) and *Time at Emar,* 169-71. As Fleming notes, in Emar 446 the primary storm god of Emar is also mentioned along with the Storm-god of Canaan, and the two are equated.
The relative chronological priority of the two sets of deities at Emar remains *sub iudice*. The Hittite arrival at Emar, despite the lack of Hittite culture there, may have advanced the place of Hebat there. If so, it may be that the older pairing at Emar was Baʿal and ʿAshtart.

the two are the recipients of temples together.[48] Although there is no further evidence as such for their pairing from Emar, Fleming points to the popularity of the personal names, Zū-Baʿla and Zū-Aštarti.[49] For example, Zu-Aš-tar-ti is the name of a king (Emar 17:1, 12, 41; 32:21; 256:33, etc.).[50] (On this score, we may contrast the situation at Ugarit where the kings have theophoric element with god names, mostly Addu names.) Zu-Aš-tar-ti is also the name of a diviner in Emar 279:5 and a priest in 336:105 (see also Emar 36:4, 8; 37:6, 20; 64:12; 65:8, 17, 18, 28, 39; 66:9; 80:6, 34; 81:2, 7, 11; 86:14, 19; 91:19, 35; 102:4 ?; 128:20; 132:5; 167:7?; 171:11; 176:33; 202:5, 8, 19, 21; 251:6; 285:9; 319:2; 343:4; 344:7?; 347:2?).[51] There are also a number of other ʿAshtart names at Emar.[52] The range of the goddess' attestation is further indicated in the following discussions.

2. The Goddess of Hunt and Warfare

According to the older survey of W. Herrmann, the goddess's primary character involves pugnacity, manifest in the hunt and battle.[53] The role of ʿAthtart best known in texts from Ugarit and Emar involves hunting, with warfare attested less. Accordingly, this section begins with the hunt. The Ugaritic material provides literary representations of hunting, while Emar supplies ritual recognition of Athtart in the hunt.

This line of reasoning was suggested to me by Daniel Fleming.

48 See Fleming, *The Installation of Baal's High Priestess at Emar*, 216-20; Fleming, *Time at Emar*, 35.

49 Fleming, *The Installation of Baal's High Priestess at Emar*, 216.

50 See also Gary Beckman, *Texts from the Vicinity of Emar in the Collection of Jonathan Rosen* (History of the Ancient Near East 11; Padova: Sargon srl, 1996), 15, 138.
For this king, see Yoram Cohen and Lorenzo d'Alfonso, "The Duration of the Emar Archives and the Relative and Absolute Chronology of the City," in *The City of Emar among the Late Bronze Age Empires. History, Landscape, and Society: Proceedings of the Konstanz Emar Conference 25.-26.04.2006* (ed. Lorenzo d'Alfonso, Yoram Cohen, and Dietrich Sürenhagen; AOAT 349; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2008), 3-25, esp. 7-8; and in the same volume, Daniel E. Fleming, "Reading Emar's Scribal Traditions Against the Chronology of Late Bronze History," 27-43, esp. 39-40.
For the name, see Pruzsinszky, *Die Personnenamen der Text aus Emar*, 285-86 and n. 366.

51 See the full listing in Beckman, *Texts from the Vicinity of Emar*, 138.

52 Other ʿAshtart PNs include Ashtar-ummī (Emar 178:2, Pruzsinszky, *Die Personennamen der Text aus Emar*, 117; see also *ʿṯtrům*, KTU 4.426:1, 4.410:31, 4.504:2; *eš$_{4}$-dar-um-mi* in Gelb, *Computer-Aided Analysis*, 73, 97). The Ugaritic and Amorite corpus shows no specifically marked feminine form. See also Greek *astharumos*, attested in Josephus, *Contra Apionem*, I 123, cited in Charles R. Krahmalkov, *Phoenician-Punic Dictionary* (OLA 90; Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters en Departement Oisterse Studies, 2000), 390, as the brother and successor of Methonastartos, king of Tyre). Cf. Anat-ummī (Emar 216:6, 8, 13, 15, 19). For other ʿAshtart names, see also Emar 36:14; 78:17, 19; 120:12; see Pruzsinszky, *Die Personnenamen der Text aus Emar*, 192.

53 Herrmann, "Aštart," *MIO* 15 (1969), 6-55.

2.1.1. ʿAthtart and the Hunt at Ugarit

For Ugarit, a particularly important text for ʿAthtart hunting is KTU 1.92. It is the only literary text presently known with ʿAthtart as its chief protagonist. It is presented here based on the newer readings of Dennis Pardee,[54] along with headings indicating different parts:

Tranche supérieure

1	*d ṯbỉl*[...]	(the text) of Ṯb'il

Recto

The Hunt of the Goddess

2	*ʿṯtrt ṣwd*[...]	ʿAthtart the huntress...
3	*tlk bmdb⸢r⸣*[...]	She goes in the outback...
4	*tḥd ʿn w hl*[...]	(Her) eye looks, and there...
5	*wtglṯ thmt ʿ*⸢-⸣[...]	and the deep flows[55]...
6	*ysỉ ġlh tḥmd*[...]	goes out. Its thicket (?) she desires...
7	*mrḥh l ảdr t*⸢-⸣[...]	her spear[56] at the vast (area?) she...
8	*tṯb ʿṯtrt bġl⸢h⸣*[...]	ʿAthtart sits in her thicket (?)...
9	*qrẓ tšt l šmả⸢l⸣*[...]	...[57] she sets to the left...
10	*ảrbẖ ʿnh tšủ w* ⸢-⸣[...]	... she lifts her eyes and...
11	*ảylt tġpy ṯ⸢r⸣*[...]	a doe that is resting (?), a bull that...
12	*bqr mrḥh tỉ⸢ẖ⸣[d...]*	...[58] Her spear she ta[kes...],
13	*š⸢ẖ⸣rh bm ymn t*⸢-⸣[...]	Her ...in her right hand...
14	⸢- *š*⸣*pl bʿl ʿb*⸢-⸣[...]	She makes low lord (?) ...

The Feast for El's household

15	*ṯr ảbh ỉl tṯr⸢m⸣*[...]	Bull, her father, El, she serves...
16	*tšlḥm yrẖ ggn*[...]	She gives to eat to Yarikh[59]...

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[54] Dennis Pardee, "Deux tablettes ougaritiques de la main d'un meme scribe, trouvées sur deux sites distinct: RS 19.039 et RIH 98/02," *Semitica et Classica* 1 (2008), 9-38. Note also the older studies of Johannes de Moor, "ʿAthtartu the Huntress (KTU 1.92)," *UF* 17 (1986), 225-26; and Meindert Dijkstra, "The Myth of Astarte, the Huntress (KTU 1.92)," *UF* 26 (1994), 113-26. The translation here includes few reconstructions (see line 12; cf. Dijkstra's rather full reconstruction of lines).

[55] See the root also in KTU 1.4 V 9 and 1.101:7-8. In both cases, it refers to the motion of water. See discussions, see Pope, *Song of Songs*, 459-60; Steven Tuell, "A Riddle Resolved by an Enigma: Hebrew GLŠ and Ugaritic GLṮ," *JBL* 112 (1993), 99-104; Smith and Pitard, *Ugaritic Baal Cycle: Volume II*, 560.

[56] W. G. E. Watson, "Tools of the Trade (KTU 4.127 and 4.385)," *UF* 34 (2002), 924.

[57] For proposals for *qrẓ* and *ảrbẖ*, see W. G. E. Watson, *Lexical Studies in Ugaritic* (Aula Orientalis – Supplementa 19; Barcelona: Editorial AUSA, 2007) 126 and 132.

[58] Pardee translates (p. 19): "à la fontaine," while Dijkstra (p. 117) renders "the cow," as part of the preceding words.

[59] This line might continue: "to [his] innards" (?) (*ggn*[*h*]). See especially KTU 1.4 VII 49, discussed by Smith and Pitard, *Ugaritic Baal Cycle: Volume II*, 689-90. For the word, see Fred Renfroe, *Arabic-Ugaritic Lexical Studies* (ALASP 5; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1992)

17	*k*[-]˹-˺*rš ḫssm*[...]	...Wise[60]...
18	˹-˺[----]˹-˺*m ʿṯt*˹*r*˺[*t*]	...Athtar[t]...
19	[ ]*ṯ*˹*r*˺[...]	...

ca. 4 lines missing

verso

The Goddess dresses (?)

20	[...]˹- ˺*t b nǵr krm*	...the guardian of the vineyard
21	[...] ˹-˺*ảbh krm ảr*	...her father, the vineyard ʾAr [61]
22	[...]*ỉ mḥtrt pṯtm*	...a cloth of linen
23	[...]˹---˺ *ủšpǵt tỉšr*	...a vestment, cypress[62]
24	[...]˹-˺*mh nšảt ẓl k kbkbm*	...she raises a gleam like the stars
25	[...]˹-˺*b km kbkb tk*˹-˺*n*	...like a star she...

The Desire of Baʿal for Athtart

26	[...]˹-˺*lả bʿl yḥmdnh yrṯy*	Baʿal desires her, he...[63]
27	[...]˹*n*˺ *ʿm*˹*h*˺ *dmrn lpnh yrd*	her beauty. Dimaranu before her descends
28	[...]˹*ả*˺*lỉy*˹*n*˺ *bʿl šm*˹-˺ *rgbt yủ*[64]	Mightiest Baʿal...
29	[...]˹-˺*mn*[-] *w srmy* ˹*-(-)-*˺*rnh*	... her/his horn(s) (?)
30	[...]˹-˺*ǵr*[-]˹-˺*nyh pdr ttǵr*	...attack (?). Pidar answers (?) her: “may she/you attack (?)
31	[...]˹-˺[ ]*šrk ảl ttn l n*	...do not give...
32	[...]˹--- ˺*tn l rbd*	...give to the bed (?)
33	[...]˹- ˺*ʿlthwyn*	...you will desire her (?)
34	[...]˹-˺*ʿrpt*	...cloud
35	[...]˹-˺*n w mnủdg*	...and...
36	[...]*l ảlỉyn bʿl*	...Mightiest Baʿal
37	[...]*l rkb ʿrpt*	...Cloud-rider...

105; and Watson, *Lexical Studies in Ugaritic*, 48. The possible other instance of this form appears in 1.16 VI 26. Greenstein (*UNP*, 47 n. 162) emends to *g‹n›gnh*, which he takes to mean, “windpipe” and hence “spirit” or “soul” or the like (see pp. 40 and 47 n. 163).

60 Given the other deities in the immediate context, it might be tempting to reconstruct Kothar-wa-Hasis, but the space and readings available for the beginning of the line do not seem militate in this direction.

61 For proposals for *ảr* as “storehouse,” see Watson, *Lexical Studies in Ugaritic*, 196.

62 For the word, see Watson, *Lexical Studies in Ugaritic*, 123. It is unclear that there is a syntactical relationship between this noun and the preceding as assumed sometimes: “a coat of cypress-wooden mail.” This often cited suggestion may be traced to Johannes C. de Moor, “Studies in the New Alphabetic Texts from Ras Shamra II,” *UF* 2 (1970), 311.

63 It is common for the verb to be taken in the sense of “possess” or “obtain,” based on Akkadian *rašû*; see *DULAT*, 750; and Watson, *Lexical Studies in Ugaritic*, 103.

64 The **yủ*- imperfect prefix of first aleph verb pertains in Ugaritic to three roots: **ʾhb*, “to love,” **ʾḫd*, “to take hold of,” and **ʾkl*, “to eat.” Given Baʿal’s desire in line 26, context might point in the direction of the first root.

The opening of the text names Athtart as a huntress who goes into the outback (lines 2-3). She lifts her eyes and sees something; what it is seems to fall in the lacuna at the end of line 4. Line 5 states that the deeps surge with water; it is unclear whether this line refers to some sort of celestial sign or the watery condition in the landscape at the moment (a watery terrain?) where the goddess is hunting.

With lines 6-13, the goddess seems to be involved in the activity of hunting. She desires, and takes cover in the low ground (?) while she holds her weapons (lines 6-13). At line 14, she seems to fell what may be an animal named only as *bʿl* of something (line 14). This does not seem to be the name of the god, who seems to enter the picture in lines 26-27. Instead, given what follows in lines 15-16, *bʿl* appears to be part of a designation that refers to the animal fed to El and Yarikh. At this point in this text, the goddess appears to feed El and Yarikh, two gods; one is the head of the divine household, the other the moon-god known elsewhere as a member of this household (see KTU 1.114:4, discussed below). The front of the text continues but without a clear indication of the narrative line.

The back of the tablet opens with a new scene after a gap. Several nouns in the lines 20-25 are discernible. Line 20 mentions the guardian of the vineyard, a figure known from the administrative text, KTU 4.141 III 17; in that text, he is listed with the guardian of the sown (4.141 III 16), a figure known from KTU 1.23:68-69.[65] Both of these guardians in 4.141 III 16-17 belong to the royal workers (4.141 I 1). So line 20 seems to reflect a mythological counterpart to the administrative role. The goddess appears to be provided with clothing in lines 22-23, which is followed in lines 24-25 with an expression perhaps of her appealing appearance. According to the text, she literally "raises a shadow" (*ẓlm* in KTU 1.170:8; cf. 1.161:1; cf. *ẓl ḫmt*, the "shaded pavilion" in 1.14 IV 55), like the stars. In other words, so it would seem, her appearance is brilliant, thus removing a shadow like the stars. Or, it might if *ẓl* refers to "gleam, shining" (cf. *ẓl ksp*, "the gleam of silver," in 1.4 III 26-28),[66] then it might be an expression for her brilliant appearance ("she shines like the stars"?).

This scene leads to Baʿal's desire for her, specifically for her beauty or loveliness, in lines 26-27. His title *dmrn* is known also from KTU 1.4 VII 39 and also from Philo of Byblos, as has long been noted.[67] He seems to approach her at the end of line 27. The verb **yrd* is more than a verb of approach, however. It may denote his approach made to her in a particular space. What transpires in the remainder of the text is remarkably difficult to

[65] M. S. Smith, *The Sacrificial Rituals and Myths of the Goodly Gods, KTU/CAT 1.23: Royal Constructions of Opposition, Intersection, Integration and Domination* (Society of Biblical Literature Resources for Biblical Studies series 51; Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2006), 122.

[66] Smith, in *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry* (ed. Simon B. Parker; SBLWAW 9; Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1997), 123 (henceforth *UNP*).

[67] Smith and Pitard, *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle: Volume 2*, 679.

discern. Line 28 mentions the god again, and lines 29-30 seem to involve a discussion about a topic that is unclear. It may be that the verb **gwr*, "to attack" occurs twice in these lines, and this might work with the reconstruction of **qrnh* here, "her/his horn" (cf. 1.12 II 21-25, referring to the enemies of Baʿal and Anat with a reference to her horns). However, this remains speculative. The figure *pdr* seems to be attested in 1.3 I 22, perhaps as an attendant of Baʿal.[68] The precise role of the figure is unclear. Meindert Dijkstra speculates that this figure "warns Baal not to waste his vigor in fighting, destroying the vineyard of Ari, and convinces him to prepare himself for marriage rites."[69]

Lines 31-32 contain the verb "to give," plus a noun that might refer to a bed[70] (cf. *trbd* in 1.132.2; and *mrbd*, "cover, blanket," in KTU 4.127:7, 4.270:11, 4.275:4 [?], 4.385:9, 9.432:34[71]) though it could be the name of a person (?). Apart from the name and titles of Baʿal and a mention of the word "cloud," lines 33-37 provide no further clear information. What is clear in this text is ʿAthtart's role as huntress on her own, without any other deities. The activity of the hunt, as well as the game given to El and Yarikh, seems fairly evident. The text then follows with a section presenting Baʿal's desire for the goddess, a matter that will be discussed below.

Hunting activity for ʿAthtart is likewise evidence from KTU 1.114, but in this case she is paired consistently with Anat. The text has been studied at considerable length by Dennis Pardee,[72] and so brackets concerning readings etc. are left aside. Instead, only a basic text and translation[73] according to the poetic lines, along with headings are provided:

The Front of the Tablet
The Drinking Party

1	*ỉl dbḥ bbth mṣd*	El slaughtered game in his house,
	ṣd bqrb hklh	game in the midst of his palace,
	ṣḥ lqṣ ỉlm	invited the gods to the choice cuts.
	tlḥmn ỉlm wtštn	The gods ate and drank,
	tštn y‹n› ʿd šbʿ	drank wine till they were loaded,

[68] Dijkstra, "The Myth of Astarte," 121: "certainly not another name of Baal."
[69] Dijkstra, "The Myth of Astarte," 121.
[70] *DULAT*, 731.
[71] W. G. E. Watson, "Tools of the Trade (KTU 4.127 and 4.385)," *UF* 34 (2002), 925.
[72] Dennis Pardee, *Les textes para-mythologiques de la 24e campagne (1961)* (Ras Shamra–Ougait IV; Mémoire 77; Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1988), 13-74; and Theodore J. Lewis, "El's Drinking Party," in *UNP*, 193-96. For the ending of the text, see also John Ford, "Ugaritic *pqq* 'dung pellet' in the Ugaritic Magico-Medical Text RS 24.258 (KTU^2 1.114)." Paper presented at the 218th Meeting of the American Oriental Society, Ancient Near East IV: Ugarit (Chicago, 15 March 2008); used with the gracious permission of the author.
[73] Based on the work of Pardee and others, the translation largely follows the rendering in Michael D. Coogan and Mark S. Smith, *Stories From Ancient Canaan* (revised and expanded edition; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012).

ṯrt ʿd škr	fine wine till they were drunk.
yʿdb yrḫ gbh km klb	Yarih set his body down like a dog,
yqṯqṯ tḥt ṯlḥnt	he crawled beneath the tables.
ỉl d ydʿnn	The god who did know him
yʿdb lhm lh	prepared food for him;
w d lydʿnn	And the one who did not know him
ylmnn ḫṭm tht ṯlḥn	beat him with sticks beneath the table.
ʿṯtrt wʿnt ymǵy	ʿAthtart and ʿAnat he approached;
ʿṯtrt tʿdb nšb lh	ʿAthtart prepared a steak for him,
wʿnt ktp	And Anat a tenderloin.
bhm ygʿr ṯǵr bt ỉl	The gate-keeper of El's house rebuked them,
pn lm k(!)lb tʿdbn nšb	that they should not prepare a steak for a dog,
lỉnr tʿdbn ktp	prepare a shoulder-cut for a hound.
bỉl ảbh gʿr	He rebuked his father El as well.
yṯb ỉl krảšk (?)	El was seated...
ỉl yṯb bmrzḥh	El was seated in his drinking-party.
yšt yn ʿd šbʿ	He drank wine till he was loaded,
ṯrt ʿd škr	fine wine till he was drunk.

El staggers home with the help of two of his sons

ỉl hlk lbth	El went to his house,
yštql lḥẓrh	He made his way to his court;
yʿmsnnn ṯkmn wšnm	Thukamuna and Shunama helped him along;
wngšnn ḥby	and Habayu confronted him –
bʿl qrnm wḏnb	lord of horns and a tail.[74]
ylšn bḫrỉh wṯnth	He smeared him with his crap and piss;[75]
ql ỉl km mt	El collapsed like a corpse,
ỉl kyrdm ảrṣ	El was like those who go down to the underworld.

Two of El's daughters go in search of ingredients to cure his hangover

ʿnt w ʿṯtrt tṣdn	ʿAnat and ʿAthtart hunt...

(Lines 24-28 are broken. They may include the ingredients described in lines 29-31.)

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74 I have speculated elsewhere that this figure may be Resheph in view of the physical description.

75 See Ford, "Ugaritic *pqq* «dung pellet» in the Ugaritic Magico-Medical Text."

The back of the tablet (beginning in line 25) issuing in El's revival

26	*ʿṯtrt w ʿnt*	ʿAthtart and ʿAnat...
	wbhm tṯṯb mdh	with them they brought back his stuff...
	km trpå hn nʿr	as they heal, there – he was revived!

Instructions to cure the effects of drunkenness (with a scribal line separates this section from the preceding)

	dyšt llṣbh	What one should apply[76] to his forehead:
	šʿr klb	"hair of dog"
30	*w rìš pqq wšrh*	and the upper part of *pqq*[77] and its root (?);
	yšt åḥdh dm zt ḫrpåt	one should apply it with fresh olive oil.

The narrative is set in El's household. The game that El prepares at the outset of the text (lines 1-2) is not given any background story. The text does not tell the audience how El came to have this game, but in view of the text's later description of ʿAnat and ʿAthtart going out to hunt for the ingredients for the cure El's drunkenness,[78] it might be surmised that the two goddesses were assumed to have hunted for the game mentioned at the beginning of the text. It would be for this reason that the two goddesses are in a position to distribute meat in lines 9-11.

The cultural background for the divine hunt is not evident from the Ugaritic corpus as such, unless we may take a cue from the story of Aqhat. Aqhat apparently receives the divine bow and arrows from his father Danil, who tells him (KTU 1.17 V 37-39): "the best of your hunt, O my so[n],... the best of your hunt, look... the hunt in [her] temp[le]."[79] Here Aqhat seems to be told to hunt and take the best or first of his hunt to a temple.[80] Since the next column (KTU 1.18 VI) presents a meeting of the goddess Anat and Aqhat, it may be surmised that her temple is the one in question. Thus we see the father's instructions to his

[76] The form is ambiguous. Theoretically *yšt* here might be derived also from **šty*, "to drink," instead of **šyt*, as rendered here, but the object "forehead" seems to point in the direction of **šyt*.
For the prescriptive use of the prefix verb in a medicinal context, compare KTU 4.767: "PN has collected henna plant; the sick man (*dw*) must eat (*y'kl*)".

[77] Often thought to be another plant name (so Pardee, *Les textes para-mythologiques*, 71; Lewis, *UNP* 196). See also other views cited in *DULAT* 677-78. Cf. Ford, "Ugaritic *pqq* 'dung pellet' in the Ugaritic Magico-Medical Text."

[78] For further evidence of Anat as huntress, see KTU 1.22 I 10-11: "As when Anat hastens to hunt/sets to flight birds of the heavens" (*UNP* 203).

[79] *UNP* 59.

[80] For *mṣd* used for offering, cf. KTU 1.14 II 26, IV 8, in *UNP* 14, 18.

son, which he presumably is to follow and which culminates in the presentation of the game in the goddess' temple. A similar pattern appears later in the story (KTU 1.18 I 24, 27, 29, 30-31). Anat instructs him: "Come, my brother, and... you will go on a hunt (*ṣd*)...I will instruct you...the town of Abiluma, A[biluma, town of Prince] Yarikh."[81] Here we have a literary representation of the human hunt, which seems to consist of four basic elements: (1) the goddess' invocation of the human addressee's relationship to her ("my brother"); (2) the divine instruction to hunt; (3) the human pursuit of the hunt in accordance with the divine instructions (in terms of place, perhaps time, etc.); and (4) the apparent presentation of the game at a sanctuary, this time at the sanctuary of the moon-god, Yarikh (see KTU 1.18 IV where the action resumes at Abiluma). It is difficult to know how representative such a picture is. However, the ritual hunt is attested for ʿAshtart in the sources from Emar (which we will see below). [82] Such a background might lie ultimately behind the representations of the hunt in the Ugaritic literary texts described here. This reconstruction would comport with the older supposition of Daniel Fleming, noted above, that ʿAshtart in the Emar texts represents a Levantine import.

In KTU 1.114, the two goddesses ʿAthtart and ʿAnat play no role after lines 9-11 until the end of the narrative (in lines 23-28), when they go hunting for ingredients for El's drunkenness and return apparently with them. The text then follows with instructions for curing the effects of intoxification. Broadly speaking, the cure in the prose instructions following the scribal line corresponds to El's heavy drinking in the poetic mythic material. More specifically, the words for the ingredients are connected with the narrative. The "hair of the dog" is probably a plant-name of the sort known in Mesopotamian medicinal texts,[83]

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81 See *UNP* 64.

82 For evidence of another example of game and slaughter of the ritual hunt, this one involving the god ʿAthtar in Old South Arabian inscriptions, see: "when he sacrificed to ʿAthtar," *ywm ḏbḥ ʿṯtr*, basically following Biella, *Dictionary of Old Old Arabic*, 91; see Maria Höfner, *Sabäische Inschriften (Letze Folge)* (Wien: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1981), 32; and, "the day he hunted the ritual hunt of ʿAthtar (*ywm ṣd ṣyd ʿṯtr)* and the *krw*-hunt/feast." RES 4177:3-4, cited in Biella, *Dictionary of Old South Arabic*, 421; on this passage, see also R. B. Serjeant, *South Arabian Hunt* (London: Luzac, 1976), 72 and 111 n. 376.
Note also sixth century BCE inscription from Marib, referring to the "[hu]nt of ʿAthtar," in A. G. Lundin and S. A. Frantsouzoff, "An Inscribed Sabaean Bronze Altar from the British Museum," *St. Petersburg Journal of Oriental Studies* 9 (1997), 384-91; and Sima, "Religion," 168. For older studies of the hunt in South Arabian sources, note also A. F. L. Beeston, "The Ritual Hunt: A Study in Old South Arabian Religious Practice," *Le Muséon* 61 (1948), 183-96; J. Pirenne, in *Corpus des inscriptions et antiquités sud-arabes* (Louvain: Editions Peeters, 1977-1986) 1.165-67; and Jacques Ryckmans, "La chasse rituelle dans l'Arabie du Sud ancienne," in *Al-Baḥīṯ: Festschrift Joseph Henninger* (St. Augustin bei Bonn: Verlag des Anthropos-Instituts, 1976), 259-308. I wish to thank Marvin H. Pope for drawing my attention to this material in the early 1980s.

83 Perhaps the name of a plant and not literally dog-hair. Compare the plants called "dog flesh, dog's tooth, dog's bone, hound's tongue," see *CAD Š/3*:51; see also *CAD L*: 209; *AHw*, 425; R. Campbell Thompson, *A Dictionary of Assyrian Botany* [London: The British Academy,

and correlates with the discussion of the dog in the narrative. It seems quite plausible also that the other ingredients are the material for which ʿAnat and ʿAthtart are said to go hunting in lines 26-27, as these seem to refer to healing (*rp') and reviving (*ʿrr in the N-stem). Thus it appears that human concerns inform the general topic of the narrative as well as many of its details.

For the purposes of understanding ʿAthtart, several features are notable. First, she is referenced as hunting. This hunting is presented here as a matter as medicinal ingredients, but it may also be inferred (as noted above) that this "hunting" presumes her role of hunting for game as seen explicitly in KTU 1.92. Second, in her hunting activity here, she is paired with Anat. It is to be noted that ʿAthtart stands before ʿAnat in this text in lines 9 and 26 but not in lines 22-23. This mix of order contrasts with other texts with these two goddesses appear together; in those instances, ʿAnat precedes ʿAthtart. Third, ʿAthtart is presented as a member of El's household. Fourth, the two goddesses seem to apply the medicinal components so as to effect the healing. The verbal form *trpả* in line 28 has been understood as a dual feminine verbal form[84]; if correct, they are credited with the activity of healing.

There is one further form of the goddess possibly relevant to ʿAthtart as huntress, and that is her name, ʿAthtart *šd*, "Athtart of the field" (KTU 1.91:10; 1.148:18; 4.182:55, 58), noted above. The specification might refer to the outback where the hunt takes place. The association of this form of the goddess follows the syllable version of the name Ishtar *ṣēri* (e.g., RS 17.352:12),[85] the second element of which is *ṣēru*, "steppe land," as noted by Pardee.[86] The Akkadian counterpart at Ugarit is of further importance as it appears in an international context involving the courts of Carchemish and Ugarit. We will return to this form of the goddess in the final section of this study.

In sum, the two narrative texts suggest a profile for the goddess as huntress in Ugaritic literary tradition, while the title ʿAthtart *šd* and its Akkadian counterpart point to this feature of the goddess in a broader band of texts, specifically in ritual and administrative material as well as an international decree. Before addressing the further significance of the goddess as huntress, we turn to the evidence from Emar.

1949], 21, 23, 26, 68, 257, 347); cf. "dog of Gula" as a plant-name, in Thompson, *A Dictionary of Assyrian Botany*, 151. Note also "shoot of dog" (*CAD* sub *per'u*).

84 See the commentators in favor of this view cited by Pardee, *Les textes para-mythologiques*, 67 n. 314. Pardee, while open to this view, prefers to see a singular form here, in which case it would refer to Anat in his reconstruction. However, see Lewis, "El's Divine Feast," in *UNP* 195, where he reads the names of both goddesses in line 26.

85 PRU IV, p. 121.

86 *RCU* 275; and see also above. In this connection, one might compare possible male corresponding figures in Ugaritic: Athtar *šd* (1.111.19-20, as read by *RCU* 92-93; cf. KTU Athtar *šb*) and perhaps the very difficult line, *'il šdy ṣd mlk* in 1.108.12. Pardee (*RCU* 205-6 n. 13) also discusses the possible relationship of this line with BH *'ēl šadday*.

2.1.2. ʿAshtart and the Hunt at Emar

The hunt is attested for ʿAshtart at Emar in a ritual context. Emar 452:21 refers to "the hunt of ʿAthtart" (*ṣa-du ša* ᵈ*Iš₈-tár*) on day 16 of the month of Abi.[87] As Fleming notes, this ritual also mentions a procession to Ashtar-sarba, which Fleming regards as an "Old Syrian form" of Eshtar/Ashtart (meaning "The Poplar-Eshtar")."[88] The two rituals on the same day of the month what Fleming understands as "two related activities: the procession from 'the storehouse' and the 'hunt' (or 'rounds'? *ṣâdu*), both for the goddess, Aštart, under two different names." The specific agricultural activity signaled by this particular manifestation of Ashtart is otherwise unknown in West Semitic sources, and it seems to represent a particular feature of this specific manifestation of the goddess. By contrast, the activity of the hunt is more consistent with sources not only from Ugarit, but also from additional information from Emar.

According to Emar 446:87-90, "the hunt of ʿAshtart" (*ṣa-du ša* ᵈ*Iš₈-tár*) takes place on the sixteenth day of the month of Mar-za-ḫa-ni,[89] followed by the hunt of Baʿal on the next day. Fleming notes that the object of this hunt is not clarified, and he raises a number of possibilities[90]: "She could be looking for game, provision in general, or even an agricultural god who has died."[91] Fleming notes, however, against the last of these options that the hunt of the god Baʿal is mentioned immediately (Emar 446:91-94) after the hunt of the goddess. The ritual hunts of the goddess and the god are represented together, as double scribal lines precede line 85 and follow line 94. This juxtaposition suggests two points. First, game or provision more generally is involved. Second, the goddess and god appear in tandem, perhaps under the influence of their pairing attested elsewhere.[92] By contrast, the god is known in Ugaritic as a hunter (for example, KTU 1.10 II), but never in tandem with the goddess. In sum, ʿAthtart/ʿAshtart as huntress is clear in sources from both Ugaritic and Emar.

It is important to note that this feature is attested more broadly. A late Aramaic text written in Demotic is translated by Richard C. Steiner: "Hand of

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[87] For this point, see Fleming, *Time at Emar*, 166, 179, 182.

[88] Fleming, *Time at Emar*, 182.

[89] If the month name bears any significance, one might be inclined to the possible association with marzahu and ʿAstart. Cf. RS 18.01, in PRU IV, 230; Lackenbacher, *Textes akkadiens d'Ugarit*, 141; John L. McLaughlin, *The marzēaḥ in the Prophetic Literature: References and Allusions in Light of the Extra-Biblical Evidence* (VTSup 86; Leiden/Boston/Köln: Brill, 2001), 17 (adapted): "From this day, concerning the vineyards of the Hurrian Ishtar (ⁱˡ*ištar ḫur-ri*) which is in Shuksu, the vineyard of the Hurrian (?) Ishtar (is) between the men of the marzeah of Aru (in Ugarit) and between the men of the marzeah of Siyannu; man against man will not transgress. Seal of Padiya king of Siyannu." For Ishtar *ḫur-ri*, see below. She seems to be the divine patron of the marzeah-associations in both Ugarit and Siyannu.

[90] Fleming, *Time at Emar*, 183. For discussion, see Fleming, *Time at Emar*, 149, 151, 165-67; and treatment of the text on pp. 268-80.

[91] Fleming, *Time at Emar*, 183.

[92] For this point, see Fleming, *Time at Emar*, 165.

my father, hand of Baal, hand of Attar my mother!...Face of Baal! Cover, coat his wounds (with spittle)! Face of the Huntress (and) face of Baal!"[93] Steiner understands the reference to "Attar my mother" as none other than "the huntress" named afterwards. This text is of further interest for four points. First, it seems to work well with the picture of ʿAthtart as healer with ʿAnat in KTU 1.114, mentioned above. The role of healing is attributed also to the goddess in the London Medical Papyrus containing Northwest Semitic incantations written in hieratic syllabic script. The attested name *ʾ-s-t-t-r* is somewhat ambiguous (it may be Ishtar), but given that it is accompanied with the name Eshmun, it would appear preferable to see the name of a West Semitic goddess.[94] Second, the pairing with Baʿal is suggestive of their relationship as noted above as well. Third, "face of Baʿal" is mentioned in association with the goddess, a feature that is well known in other contexts and that will be discussed further below. Fourth and finally, the late Aramaic text suggests an ongoing Levantine tradition of the goddess as huntress down through the latter part of the first millennium.

2.2. War

2.2.1. ʿAthtart and warfare: Ugaritic Evidence

The evidence attested for ʿAthtart at Ugaric as a warrior is limited and circumstantial. She is depicted in KTU 1.2 I 40 as participating in restraining the god Baʿal:

[*ymnh (?).ʿn*]*t.tủḫd*	[His right hand (?)ʿAn]at seized,
šmảlh.tủḫd.ʿṯtrt	His left hand ʿAthtart seized.

As in the hunt in KTU 1.114, here in this description of physical confrontation, ʿAthtart is paired with Anat.

In connection with the goddess as a warrior, it is tempting to relate the reference to *ʿṯtrt* in KTU 1.86, "dream-book" (*s*[*p*]*r ḥlmm*) as it is called in line 1. Mentioned in line 6 are horses of *ʿṯtrt*. While in theory this could be either a place-name or goddess, the second option seems likelier in view of the mention of Baʿal in line 3.[95] Perhaps her horses suggest an assumption of

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[93] Steiner, "The Scorpion Spell from Wadi Ḥammamat: Another Aramaic Text in Demotic Script," *JNES* 60/4 (2001), 260, 264. The Aramaic spelling *ʿtr* rather than **ʿštr* is notable; see Steiner, "The Scorpion Spell," 267. Perhaps the name derived from a Phoenician context "subsequently borrowed and adapted by Arameans being borrowed by the Egyptians for their use" (I borrow this formulation from Steiner's discussion of the West Semitic incantations in the London Medical Papyrus in his essay, "Northwest Semitic Incantations in an Egyptian Medical Papyrus of the Fourteenth Century B.C.E.," *JNES* 51/3 [1992], 199, discussed below).

[94] See Steiner, "Northwest Semitic Incantations in an Egyptian Medical Papyrus of the Fourteenth Century B. C. E.," *JNES* 51/3 (1992), 194.

[95] So translated in *RCU* 146.

the goddess as a warrior. In support for this notion may be the iconography of ʿAthart riding in Egyptian material.[96]

2.2.2. Ashtart and warfare: evidence from Emar

The Emar is more substantial, if only because of the widespread title of Ashtart *ša tāḫāzi*, "ʿAshtart of combat" (Emar 370:20; 373:12; 379:1; 380:2; 381:11; 382:1, 6; 460:1, 6, 9; 495:3'; Westenholz,[97] #30:1). Emar 460 mentions this Ashtart several times:

Line 1: "This tablet is of the cry of Ashtart of combat"
Line 6: "consecration of Ashtart of combat"
Line 9: "consecration of the priest of Ashtart of combat"
(cf. line 25: "Ashtart du piétinement")

Joan Goodnick Westenholz comments: "The cult of ʿAštarte-of-Battle was probably the basis of the ʿAštarte cult in Emar; her priestess seems to have been the *mašårtu* and the principal participants in her night festival were known as 'men-of-battle'"[98] Evidence for Ashtart as a martial figure also extends to the onomasticon: Aštartu-qarrād, "Ashtartu is a warrior" (PN *Aš-tar-ti*-UR.SAG 215:15)[99]; and Aštartu-lit, "Ashtartu is power."[100]

This feature of the goddess is attested elsewhere. A Late Bronze seal from Bethel seems to depict the goddess as a warrior and includes the spelling of her name in hieroglyphs.[101] She is also famous as one of the West Semitic war-goddesses in New Kingdom Egypt.[102] She is called "furious and tempes-

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96 J. Leclant, "Astarté à cheval d'après les réprentations égyptiennes," *Syria* 37 (1960), 1-67; and I. Cornelius, *The Iconography of Gods Reshef and Baʿal: Late Bronze and Iron Age I Periods (c 15000-1000 BCE)* (OBO 140; Freiburg, Schweiz: Universitätsverlag; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994), 81.

97 Joan Goodnick Westenholz, *Cuneiform Inscriptions in the Collection of the Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem: The Emar Tablets* (Cuneiform Monographs 13; Groningen: Styx Publications, 2000), 74-75. Texts from this volume are henceforth cited as Westenholz.

98 Westenholz, *Cuneiform Inscriptions*, 75. It is to be noted that the motif of the hunt for the goddess in Emar 446 is probably older according to Fleming (personal communication) and thus be no less the basis for the cult of the goddess at Emar. To my mind, the features of the hunt and combat for the goddess seem to cohere.

99 For the name, see Regine Pruzsinszky, *Die Personnenamen der Text aus Emar* (Studies on the Civilization and Culture of Nuzi and the Hurrians 13; Bethesda, MD: CDL Press, 2003), 117.

100 For the name, see Pruzsinszky, *Die Personnenamen der Text aus Emar*, 117.

101 See Othmar Keel and Christoph Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel* (trans. Thomas H Trapp; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998) 88 esp. n. 28; for an illustration, see p. 87, #109 (reference courtesy of Elizabeth M. Bloch-Smith). According to Keel and Uehlinger (88, n. 28), the two deities depicted on the seal, Baʿal-Seth and the goddess *ʿstrt* "guard the name of Astarte (as one would at the entrance to a shrine)." For further discussion of this evidence, see the contribution to this volume by Izak Cornelius.

102 *ANET*, 250; Leclant, "Astarté à cheval," 1-67; Rainer Stadelmann, *Syrisch-Palästinensische Gottheiten in Ägypten* (Probleme der Ägyptologie 5; Leiden: Brill, 1967) 101-12;

tuous" in "Astarte and the Sea," a local Egyptian version of a West Semitic myth.[103] 1 Samuel 31:10 (cf. 1 Chronicles 10:10) might reflect the idea of the goddess as a divinity of warfare, as the armor of Saul won in battle is put by the Philistines into her temple.[104] The curse in the treaty of Esarhaddon with Baʿal of Tyre invokes her: "May Astarte break your bow in the thick of battle, and have you crouch at the feet of your enemy."[105] This characterization comports closely with Ishtar's title as "lady of battle and war" from the same period.[106] In this connection, it is to be noted that in the Aramaic text noted above, the goddess ʿAthtart and the god Baʿal appear as divine aids against "our enemy," the scorpion that has bitten. This role is analogous to divine combat against cosmic or divine enemies in the Ugaritic texts. These later references suggest that this feature of the goddess continued to be known in the Iron Age and arguably much later.

2.3. Gender Inversion

Of great importance for scholarly discussions of anthropomorphism are the characterizations of goddesses hunting and in combat. ʿAnat and ʿAthtart appear as hunting in a number of texts, while it is equally clear that human females are expected not to hunt, as Aqhat's response to ʿAnat shows. He says to the goddess (KTU 1.17 VI 40), either as a question, "now do womenfolk hunt?" or perhaps as a sarcastic claim: "now womenfolk hunt!" (*ht tṣdn tỉnṯt*). However one interprets the syntax here, it seems that human women on this matter are considered to contrast with ʿAnat and ʿAthtart. This particular case indicates that anthropomorphism may occasionally work in inverse terms rather than parallel terms. In many instances, the divine roles parallel the human roles: gods may be represented like human males in the arenas of patriarchy and kingship for males, and goddesses like human females in the arena of marriage and domestic chores. Notably exceptional are the goddesses' roles in hunting and with battle.[107]

Charles C. Van Siclen III, "A Memphite Lintel with Astarte," *Varia Egyptica* 7 (1991), 131-34; Donald B. Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 232-35; and Linda Carless Hulin, "The Worshippers of Asiatic Gods in Egypt," in *Papers for Discussion I, 1981-1982* (compiled and edited by Sarah Groll; Presented by the Department of Egyptology; Jerusalem: Hebrew University, n.d.), 270-77.

[103] *ANET*, 17.

[104] Day, "Ashtoreth," *ABD* I, 492.

[105] *ANET*, 534.

[106] Vassals treaties of Esarhaddon, col. vi, line 453, D. J. Wiseman, *The Vassal-Treaties of Esarhaddon* (London: British School of Archaeology in Iraq, 1958), 63-64; see also Esarhaddon text, in Martti Nissinen, *Prophets and Prophecy in the Ancient Near East* (SBLWAW 12; Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 2003), 140, #97, line 74.

[107] Cf. "to go to war is a festival for young men" and "battle is a feast for her [Inanna]," cited from *CAD I/J*:197 by Rivkah Harris, "Inanna-Ishtar as Paradox and Coincidence of Opposites," *History of Religion* 30/3 (1991), 269.

This observation calls for further explanation, especially since Baʿal is likewise engaged in hunting (KTU 1.10 II) and warfare (KTU 1.2 IV, 1.4 VII 7-14); Rashpu, too, may be considered a hunter (see KTU 4.262:2). While Baʿal clearly mirrors these male human preoccupations; yet in terms of gender ʿAthtart and ʿAnat represent an inversion of this role relative to the societal attitude toward human women. How is the gender situation with deities in these roles to be explained? Why are both a god and goddesses represented in these roles when there is a disparity in the representation of these roles for human males and females?[108] Peggy L. Day asks the right question with respect to ʿAnat: "why is Anat a hunter and a warrior?" Her answer focuses on ʿAnat's liminal status as an adolescent unattached to male social structure via marriage and motherhood. This status of the goddess at the divine level seems inverse to her relationship ("my brother") with the young would-be hunter in the story of Aqhat. In other words, the specific evidence about her relationship ("my brother") with the young would-be hunter in the story of Aqhat corresponds to her lack of spousal relationship to any god, at least in the Ugaritic texts. We may take a further hint on this score again from the story of Aqhat, although it must be conceded that this is a rather speculative deduction on my part. As noted above, ʿAnat gives instructions to Aqhat (KTU 1.18 I 24, 27, 29): "Come, my brother, and...you will go on a hunt...I will instruct you."[109] This passage, if correctly understood, suggests that the goddess has a relationship with the human addressee ("my son") and represents herself as his instructor in hunting. Thus while the god Baʿal and the goddesses ʿAnat and ʿAthtart may manifest the human male hunting role, the goddesses may not simply show an inverse mirroring but also has an additional dimension: she is represented as both role model and mentor. In a sense, the goddess can bond with him in the matter of the hunt and thus address him in terms of intimacy ("my brother"). She unlike the god is present and active in his development as a hunter.

3. The Goddess' Relations to Other Deities

3.1. Relationship to the Storm-God

3.1.1. Pairing?

Circumstantial evidence for the pairing of Baʿal and ʿAshtart at Emar (especially in the rituals of the hunt in Emar 446) has been noted above. As Fleming observes, her temple appears to be paired with Baʿal's, and although

[108] Day, "Why is Anat a Hunter and a Warrior?" in *The Bible and the Politics of Exegesis: Essays in Honor of Norman K. Gottwald on his Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (ed. David Jobling, Peggy L. Day and Gerald T. Sheppard; Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 1991), 141-46, 329-32.

[109] See *UNP* 64.

there is no further evidence as such for their pairing from Emar, Fleming has noted the popularity of the personal names, Zū-Baʿla and Zū-Aštarti.[110]

The Ugaritic evidence is scant at best. Above I noted KTU 1.92. The section pertaining to Baʿal and ʿAthtart in lines 26-37 is repeated here:

26	[...]˹-˺*lả bʿl yḥmdnh yrṯy*	Baʿal desires her, he...[111]
27	[...]˹*n*˺ *ʿm*˹*h*˺ *dmrn lpnh yrd*	her beauty. Dimaranu before her descends
28	[...]˹*ả*˺*lỉy*˹*n*˺ *bʿl*	Mightiest Baʿal
	šm˹-˺ *rgbt yủ*[112]	...
29	[...]˹-˺*mn*[-] *w srmy* ˹-(-)-˺*rnh*	... her/his horn(s) (?)
30	[...]˹-˺*ǵr*[-]˹-˺*nyh pdr ttǵr*	...attack (?). Pidar answers (?) her: "may she/you attack (?)
31	[...]˹-˺[ ]*šrk ảl ttn l n*	...do not give...
32	[...]˹--- ˺*tn l rbd*	...give to the bed (?)
33	[...]˹- ˺*ʿlthwyn*	...you will desire her (?)
34	[...]˹-˺ *ʿrpt*	...cloud
35	[...]˹-˺*n w mnủdg*	...and...
36	[...]*l ảlỉyn bʿl*	...Mightiest Baʿal
37	[...]*l rkb ʿrpt*	...Cloud-rider

If *rbd* in line 32 were a bed, especially in the wake of Baʿal's desire (**ḥmd* in line 26 and perhaps **hwy* in line 33; cf. KTU 1.15 I 14, 1.133:4), it would be tempting to understand this section as suggesting sexual relationship between Baʿal and a second party, perhaps ʿAthtart herself. This is of course the very sort of speculation that scholars have criticized about older interpretations of other texts, in particular those naming Baʿal and Anat.[113] At the same

[110] Fleming, *The Installation*, 216.

[111] It is common for the verb to be taken in the sense of "possess" or "obtain," based on Akkadian *rašû*; see *DULAT* 750; and Watson, *Lexical Studies in Ugaritic*, 103.

[112] The **yủ*- imperfect prefix of first aleph verb pertains in Ugaritic to three roots: **’hb*, "to love," **’ḫd*, "to take hold of," and **’kl*, "to eat." Given Baʿal's desire in line 26, context might point in the direction of the first root.

[113] See Neal H. Walls, *The Goddess Anat in Ugaritic Myth* (SBLDS 135; Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1992); and Peggy L. Day, "Why is Anat a Hunter and a Warrior?" in *The Bible and the Politics of Exegesis: Essays in Honor of Norman K. Gottwald on his Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (ed. David Jobling, Peggy L. Day and Gerald T. Sheppard; Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 1991), 141-46, 329-32. Walls is quite detailed and addresses many specific Ugaritic texts, while Day's treatment is more general in its scope. Both studies show considerable precision and proper probing of the Ugaritic evidence. Walls in particular parses out the evidence and offers qualified conclusions in such a manner so as to quarantine data that are suggestive of the goddess as Baʿal's consort. For example, Walls (*The Goddess*, 146 n. 65) assumes that "The Contest of Horus and Seth for the Rule" (mentioned shortly below) involves a misunderstanding, a position for which he provides no evidence. He also does not address *bʿl bʿl ʿnwt*, "Baʿal, husband of Anat," as read by *DNWSI* 183 based on Syria 33 81, line 3. While Walls and Day have provided a much-needed corrective to prior studies, the issue is not entirely settled, as the data mentioned below may suggest. At

time, such well-placed criticism does not answer the question about the figure with whom Baʿal is engaging in sexual relations, either in those texts or possibly here (assuming such relations are involved in this context). It may be suspected but hardly confirmed that Baʿal and ʿAthtart were thought to engage in sexual relations in this passage. If this hypothetical reconstruction were correct, it would explain Baʿal's desire in this text. It might also help to understand ʿAthtart as a recipient of sacrifice in 1.148.16, a text that may bear the heading in line 1, "for the family (?) of Baʿal."[114] However, it must be reiterated that this is highly speculative.

At the same time, this notion of Baʿal and ʿAthtart as a couple would fit roughly contemporary as well as later evidence for Baʿal and the goddess. The data are scant at best. The New Kingdom Egyptian text sometimes called "The Contest of Horus and Seth for the Rule," ʿAnat and Astarte are regarded as divine daughters as well as would-be wives of Seth,[115] although the view has been debated by Egyptologists.[116] In general, there is no particularly firm evidence for the god and goddess as consorts, as held by some scholars.[117]

Later evidence for the goddess as Baʿal's seems more forthcoming. A neo-Punic dedicatory inscription from Mididi in Tunisia (12 km. west of Maktar) reads:

mqdš bn' lʿštrt št bʿl	Sanctuary built for ʿAshtart consort of Baʿal;
bn' bʿl' hmyddm	the citizens of Mididi built (it).[118]

A similar picture seems to inform a description of the two deities in Philo of Byblos (*PE* 1.10.31): "Greatest Astarte and Zeus, called both Demarous and Adodos, king of gods, were ruling over the land with the consent of

the same, it should be said in support of their approach that what Late Bronze sources we do have show no particular picture of either goddess as the consort of the god.

114 So *RCU* 118, with irregular correspondence of the third consonant in *ṯpḥ bʿl*; cf. "the assembly of Baʿal," in 1.39.7.

115 *ANET*, 15.

116 For discussion, see Walls, *The Goddess Anat*, 144-52. Concerning the interpretation of the text, see further Edward F. Wente, "Response to Robert A. Oden's 'The Contendings of Horus and Seth' (Chester Beatty Papyrus No. 1): A Structural Interpretation," *History of Religions* 18/4 (1979), 370-72.

117 See, for example, John Day, "Ashtoreth," *ABD* I, 491, 492.

118 See the publication by M. H. Fantar, "L'archéologie punique en Tunisie 1991-1995," *Revue des Études Phéniciennes-Puniques et des Antiquités Libyques* XI (1999), 49-61, esp. 58. See also Corinne Bonnet, *Astarté: Dossier documentaire et perspectives historiques* (Contributi alla storia della Religione Fenicio-Punica II; Collezione di Studi Fenici 37; Rome: Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, 1996), 106-7; and Karel Jongeling, *Handbook of Neo-Punic Inscriptions* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 154. The inscription is first century CE according to Bonnet, *Astarté*, 166.

Kronos."[119] As noted by Saul M. Olyan,[120] here together are Astarte and Zeus Demarous/Adodos, in other words Baʿal. In sum, there seems to be little explicit evidence of their pairing from Emar[121] and also a little, later evidence of ʿAshtart and Baʿal as consorts. It must also be emphasized that there is very little evidence that shows relationship thematized as a matter of consort relations. It is possible that what little evidence we have may point in the direction of the relationship as a particularly Levantine phenomenon. As noted above, Fleming sees this pairing as a coastal (possibly Canaanite) phenomenon, one not necessarily native to inland Emar. This situation would also serve to explain a better-known phenomenon regarding the two deities, namely the goddess as "the name" of the god attested also around the Mediterranean basin, as well as her adoption among the Philistines (1 Samuel 31:10//1 Chronicles 10:10).

3.1.2. ʿAthtart as the "name of Baʿal" and "face of Baʿal"

The goddess as the "name of Baʿal" is well known from two parallel passages involving a curse, KTU 1.2 I 8 = 1.16 VI 56:

yṯb[*r ḥrn yymm*]	"May [Horanu] bre[ak, O Yammu],
[*yṯbr ḥrn*] *rʾišk*	[May Horanu break] your head,
ʿṯtrt š[*m bʿl qdqdk*]	ʿAthtartu-Na[me-of-Baʿal, your skull.]"
yṯbr ḥrn ybn	"May Horanu break, my son,
yṯbr ḥrn rʾišk	May Horanu break your head,
ʿṯtrt šm bʿl qdqdk	ʿAthtartu-Name-of-Baʿlu, your skull."

As many commentators have noted, the goddess also bears the title, "name of Baʿal," *šm bʿl* in a fifth century Phoenician royal inscription from Sidon (KAI 14:18).[122]

As noted above, a late Aramaic text written in Demotic attests to the "face of Baʿal," but with some elaborations. The relevant lines are translated by Richard C. Steiner: "Hand of my father, hand of Baal, hand of Attar my mother!...Face of Baal! Cover, coat his wounds (with spittle)! Face of the

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119 For the text, see Harold W. Attridge and Robert A. Oden, Jr., *Philo of Byblos. The Phoenician History: Introduction, Critical Text, Translation, Notes* (CBQMS 9; Washington, DC: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1981), 54, 55. The passage further locates this Astarte in Tyre; if so, then this Baʿal here may be Baʿal Shamem.
Cf. pairing of Astarte and Rhea with Kronos (El), in Attridge and Oden, 52-53 (cf. model of KTU 1.23, with its pairing of two unnamed females with El).

120 Olyan, *Asherah and the Cult of Yahweh in Israel* (SBLMS 34; Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1988), 9-11.

121 Keel and Uehlinger (*Gods, Goddesses and Images of God*, 88 n. 28) see a pairing of the two deities in the Late Bronze seal from Bethel (noted above).

122 See *ANET*, 662.

Huntress (and) face of Baal!"[123] It would seem that this text preserves an older usage of ʿAthtart as "the face of Baʿal," an expression famously attested in Phoenician-Punic texts predicated of Tnt as *pn bl* (KAI 78:2, 79:1, 10-11, 85:1, 86:1, 87:2, 88:1, 137:1), and *pʿn bʿl* in KAI 94:1, 97:1, 102:1 and 105:1, and in Greek transcriptions as *phanē bal* (KAI 175:2) and *phenē bal* (KAI 176:2-3).[124]

This "Tnt, face of Bal" is paired with the god, Baʿal (KAI 78:2, 79:1-2), more commonly *bʿl ḥmn* (KAI 85:1-2, 86:1-2, 88:1-2, 94:1-2, 97:1-2, 102:1-2, 105:1, 137:1). In view of the new evidence from Egypt provided by Steiner, it might be tempting to identify Tnt as Astarte, but the two are named together though as separate goddesses in KAI 81:1; thus the two appear to be distinguished.[125] At the same time, in view of the ambiguities of the evidence, perhaps it is possible that if Tnt is a title (its meaning remains *sub iudice*), then perhaps it was enjoyed by more than one figure in different locales and times. James Pritchard published an inscription from Sarepta dedicating a statue "to Tnt-ʿAshtart" (*ltntʿštrt*).[126] Pritchard suggested that Tnt and ʿAshtart here were identified in the form of a double name or "where is an implied conjunction between the two divine names...both of whom were served in the same shrine."[127] C. Leong Seow favors the first direction suggested by Pritchard: "it is possible that role of ʿAthtart/ʿAštart in the Eastern Mediterranean world was replaced in North Africa by the goddess Tnt."[128] This conclusion would work well with the evidence noted by Steiner. The passage is unusual in mentioning the god and goddess together with this "face" and "hand." Clearly, this text is expansive in its usage compared with the prior cases of "name of Baʿal" that scholars have observed.

123 Steiner, "The Scorpion Spell from Wadi Ḥammamat: Another Aramaic Text in Demotic Script," *JNES* 60/4 (2001), 260, 264.

124 For this listing, see C. L. Seow, "Face," in *DDD*, 322. S. Ribichini ("Gad," in *DDD*, 340) cites Phoenician dedicatory text from Nora: "For the Lady, for Tanit, Face of Baal and Fortune" (RES 1222). Note also the Greek translation of the neo-Punic formulary in an inscription from El-Hofra: "(to) Kronos ‹and?› Thenith, face of Bal" (*knonōi ‹kai› theneith phenē bal*); see James Noel Adams, *Bilingualism and the Latin Language* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003) 241-42; and Robert M. Kerr, "Latino-Punic and its Linguistic Environment" (Ph. D. diss., Universiteit Leiden, 2007), 166 (I wish to thank the author for providing me with this work).

125 See KAI 2.98; Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge/London: Harvard University Press, 1973), 30. As Cross notes, the text also goes on to mention their temples in the plural. For the problems of the identification of Tnt, see Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 28-35; and Robert A. Oden, *Studies in Lucian's* De Dea Syria (HSM 15; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1977).

126 Pritchard, *Recovering Sarepta, A Phoenician City: Excavations at Sarafand, Lebanon, 1969-1974, by the University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 104-5. Pritchard notes many divine double-names (what he calls "compounds").

127 Pritchard, *Recovering Sarepta*, 107.

128 Seow, "Face," in *DDD*, 322. So already Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 29.

The meaning of these expressions, "name of Baʿal," and "face of Baʿal," remain a matter of discussion.[129] P. Kyle McCarter refers to these sort of expressions as "hypostases," and sees them as representing the "cultically available presence in the temple" of the god."[130] It is true that the "name" of the deity is a cultically attested divine feature in Psalm 29:2 and is suggestive of McCarter's view, at least in some instances. For "the name of Baʿal," I have compared PNs that consist of the same formation, for example *šmbʿl* (KTU 4.116:7, 4.682:8).[131] This name seems to denote this person's identity (as "name" does elsewhere), [132] in relationship to the god in a manner analogous to the goddess' designation as *šm bʿl*. Accordingly, the goddess has her identity marked in relation to the god. This view may be combined with McCarter's interpretation. It could also accommodate the notion of the goddess as "the face of Baʿal," given the use of "face" for presence (cf. Psalm 42:3).[133] In a recent survey of the evidence for "name" in Ugaritic, Theodore J. Lewis understands KTU 1.2 IV 28 as "By/With the Name, ʿAthtartu hexed (Yammu)." [134] For Lewis, the "name" is a weapon magically wielded by the goddess, and accordingly he ties this usage with her title "name of Baʿal." As noted by Lewis, there are other understandings of 1.2 IV 28. Elsewhere (e.g., KTU 1.114:14) the verb in question (*gʿr*) takes the preposition *b*-, which if applicable in this instance as well, would not work with Lewis' interpretation of KTU 1.2 IV 28. It is thus unclear that the "name" is a weapon in this case, although this interpretation is not to be excluded. In sum, "name" denotes identity, while "face" suggests presence.

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[129] Note the older discussions by Michael D. Coogan, *Stories from Ancient Canaan* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978), 74; Saul M. Olyan, *Asherah and the Cult of Yahweh in Israel* (SBLMS 34; Atlanta, GA: Scholars, 1988), 48; and Smith, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism*, 74-76, 238-41.

[130] McCarter, "Aspects of the Religion of the Israelite Monarchy," in *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross* (ed. P. D. Miller, Jr., Paul D. Hanson, and S. Dean McBride; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 147. On the "name" as "hypostasis," McCarter stands in a long line of tradition; see the other authors listed in Smith, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism*, 74 and 239 nn. 59-62.

[131] Smith, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism*, 74-76. Add (assuming its authenticity) the same PN in an inscribed arrowhead published by P. Kyle McCarter, Jr., "Two Bronze Arrowheads with Archaic Alphabetic Inscriptions," *Eretz Israel* 26 (1999 = Frank Moore Cross Volume), 123*-128*; and note McCarter's discussion of the name on p. 127* n. 13.

[132] Compare opponents who wish to know the name of their antagonist, in the Sumerian fable, "The Lion and the She-Goat," in Bendt Alster, *Wisdom of Ancient Sumer* (Bethesda, MD: CDL Press 2005), 362; and in Genesis 32:28.

[133] See the comprehensive study of Friedhelm Hartenstein, *Das Angesicht JHWHs: Studien zu seinem höfischen und kultichen Bedeutungshintergrund in den Psalmen und in Exodus 32-34* (FAT 55; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008). Note also the older study of Mark S. Smith, "'Seeing God' in the Psalms: The Background to the Beatific Vision in the Hebrew Scriptures," *CBQ* 50 (1988), 171-83.

[134] Lewis, "ʿAthtartu's Incantations," *JNES* forthcoming. For another survey focusing on "name" in Deuteronomy, see Michael Hundley, "To Be or Not to Be: A Reexamination of Name Language in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History," *VT* 59 (2009), 533-55.

3.2. Combination of ʿAnat and other deities

3.2.1. Combination with ʿAthtart

There is relatively little evidence for Anat in the cult of Emar.[135] By contrast, Ugaritic evidence for ʿAnat and ʿAthtart in combination together is evident. In several instances, ʿAnat precedes ʿAthtart; the major exception is 1.114, with its multiple references to ʿAthtart and ʿAnat.

In section I above, it was noted that the two goddesses appear linked by *w*, and," in two incantational texts, KTU 1.100:20 and 1.107:20 as well as the narrative of 1.114.9, 22-23, and 26. It is also noted above that a few texts also show the two goddesess in poetic parallelism, for example, 1.2 I 40: "[His hand?] ʿAnat seized,//His right hand ʿAthtart seized." Comparable poetic parallelism may be seen in KTU 1.14 III 41-42 = 1.14 VI 26-28, in its physical comparison of the human Huray with the two goddesses:

dk nʿm ʿnt nʿmh	...whose loveliness is like the loveliness of ʿAnat,
km tsm ʿṯtrt ts[*mh*]	[whose bea]uty is like the beauty of ʿAthtart.[136]

We may note at this point this feature of her beauty, which seems to be mentioned also in 1.92.27 according to Pardee's reading, [...]⌜*n*⌝ *ʿm*⌜*h*⌝. Beauty is a hallmark of young goddesses.

The parade example of the two goddesses together is KTU 1.114:10-11, which connects them both syntactically and by parallelism:

ʿṯtrt wʿnt ymġy	ʿAthtart and ʿAnat he approached;
ʿṯtrt tʿdb nšb lh	ʿAthtart had prepared a steak for him,
wʿnt ktp	And ʿAnat a tenderloin.

Overall, the pairing of the two goddesses seems to be based on their shared roles as beautiful, hunting warrior-goddesses. Their pairing also raises the question as to whether there is an understanding of their relationship from the perspective of the divine family. In the past, it was common for ʿAnat to be identified as Baʿal's consort, but this view has fallen into disrepute because of the lack of Ugaritic evidence. The skepticism is justified. At the same time, it remains a possibility. In this connection for ʿAthtart, it is to be noted that in the New Kingdom Egyptian text sometimes called "The Contest of Horus and Seth for the Rule," Anat and Astarte appear together.[137] This

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[135] Only the place-name is known; see S. Basetti, "Anat in a Text from Emar," in *Studies on the Civilization and Culture of Nuzi and the Hurrians. Volume 8: Richard F. S. Starr Memorial Volume* (ed. David L. Owen and Gernot Wilhelm; Bethesda, MD: CDL Press, 1996), 245-46.

[136] See *UNP*, 17, 23.

[137] *ANET*, 15.

pairing is hardly exceptional for Egyptian sources. A New Kingdom poem in praise of the royal war-chariot praises a dual part of it, likening it to Anat and Astarte, while it is said of Ramses III: "Anat and Astarte are a shield to him." It would appear that the pairing of the goddesses traditional in West Semitic sources found its way into New Kingdom sources.[138]

3.2.2. Combination with Rashap (Resheph)

There is no evidence on this score for Emar, but Ugaritic contains some possible hints in this direction. ʿAthtart seems to be mentioned with Rashap (possibly Rashp, and sometimes called Resheph) perhaps because of their shared capacity as deities of warfare.[139] At the same time, it is to be noted that the Ugaritic evidence is not terribly extensive.

We begin with the administrative text, KTU 4.219:2-3. Its first two listings of wine (*yn*, line 1), by jars (as suggested by *kdm* and *kd* in subsequent lines), are devoted to these deities:

> Eighteen [(jars) for] the house of ʿAthtart
> Thirteen (jars) [for the h]ouse of Rashap-*gn*

KTU 1.91 lists wine (*yn*, line 1) apparently for various occasions.[140] Lines 10-11 give the occasion for ʿAthtart and for the Rashap's:

> (for) when ʿAthtart *šd* enters the house of the king.
> (for) when the Rashap's (*ršpm*) enter (*tʿrbn*) the house of the king.[141]

The Rashap's may either be the retinue of the god or the collectivity of the god's manifestations. It is unclear if there is any consistent reason for the listing in this text. We may also note the warrior gods, Baʿal in line 14 and Rashap *ṣbiʾ* in line 15. The pairing of Rashap and ʿAthtart in Ugaritic also fits with their mention together in one of Amenhotep's inscriptions: "Rashap and Astarte were rejoicing in him for doing all that his heart desired."[142] A private votive stele from Tell el-Borg likewise mentions the two deities.[143]

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138 *ANET*, 250.

139 This idea of pairing with Rashap appears in Anja Herold, "Piramesses – The Northern Capital: Chariots, Horses and Foreign Gods," in *Capital Cities: Urban Planning and Spiritual Dimensions. Proceedings of the Symposium held on May 27-29, 1996 Jerusalem, Israel* (ed. Joan Goodnick Westenholz; Jerusalem: Bible Lands Museum, 1998), 140.

140 As noted above, del Olmo Lete (*Canaanite Religion*, 261) understands KTU 1.91 as part of a list of rituals, with line 10 referring to 1.148.18-22.

141 The long form of the verb with *-n* plural ending indicates that the *-m* on the subject is not a singular with enclitic. For Reshephs in Egyptian and Phoenician sources, see Smith, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism*, 67-68.

142 *ANET*, 244.

143 James K. Hoffmeier and Kenneth A. Kitchen, "Resheph and Astarte in North Sinai: A Recently Discovered Stela from Tell el-Borg," *Ägypten und Levante* 17 (2007), 127-86,

We may mention one final possible correspondence between the two deities, in this case one involving their attribute-animals. Above we saw in RIH 98/02 evidence for the lion as the emblem animal for the goddess. In his study of Rashap,[144] Edward Lipinski mentions Rashap *gn* being attested on a clay rhyton in the form of "a face of a lion," as mentioned in the inscription on the object, KTU 6.62.[145] Yigael Yadin had suggested that the form of the lion was selected because this may have been the god's emblem animal.[146] This representation is perhaps analogous to the lioness as the emblem of a corresponding warrior goddess, Astarte.

In sum, the amount of evidence for this pairing is not particularly great, yet it comports reasonably well with what is known of the two deities.

3.2.3. ʿAthtart and Yamm?

In a recent article,[147] Noga Ayali-Darshan has proposed that a number of sources, most prominently the Egyptian text sometimes known as "Astarte and the Sea," suggest a tradition of Yamm and Astarte in which the goddess attempts to seduce the god through physical allurement. More specifically, Astarte is the consort of Sea according to Ayali-Darshan.

The text, "Astarte and the Sea," has been treated quite extensively,[148] and it is clear that the text represents an eastern Mediterranean tradition not originally indigenous to Egypt. It has been compared variously with Ugaritic and Hittite materials. The text's references to Yamm, Astarte and Seth are suggestive of a West Semitic milieu, as noted by Ayali-Darshan. The first two are notably West Semitic deities, and scholars regularly note the Egyptian use of Seth for West Semitic Baʿal. In addition, the reference to the council of the gods under the rubric of the Ennead seems to represent an Egyptian adaptation of the West Semitic divine council. Similarly, Astarte's title, "daughter of Ptah," might reflect an Egyptian adaptation of Astarte as one of El's daughters.

discussed by Edward Lipiński, *Resheph: A Syro-Canaanite Deity* (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 181; Studia Phoenicia XIX; Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 2009), 170-71. See also the contribution of Keiko Tazawa to this volume.

144 Lipinski, *Resheph*, 104.

145 *RCU* 126.

146 Yadin, "New Gleanings on Resheph from Ugarit," in *Biblical and Related Studies Presented to Samuel Iwry* (eds. Ann Kort and Scott Morschauer; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1985), 266-68, 271. Yadin preferred to associate the leonine iconography with Athirat.

147 Noga Ayali-Darshan, „'The Bride of the Sea': The Traditions about Astarte and Yamm in the Ancient Near East," in *A Woman of Valor: Jerusalem Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Honor of Joan Goodnick Westenholz* (ed. W. Horowitz, U. Gabbay, F. Vukosavovic; Bibliotheca del Proximo Oriente Antiguo 8; Madrid: C.S.I.C., 2010), 19-33

148 See the translation of Robert K. Ritner, in *COS* 1.35-36. In addition to the secondary literature cited there, note P. Collombert and L. Coulon, "Les dieux contre la mer: Le début du 'papyrus d'Astarté' (pBN 202)," *BIFAO* 1000 (2000), 193-242; and Thomas Schneider, "Texte über den syrischen Wettergott aus Ägypten," *UF* 35 (2003), 605-27.

According to Ayali-Darshan, “Astarte and the Sea” is suggestive of a relationship between Astarte and Yamm. As noted by commentators on this text, the text is very difficult, marred by many lacunas. As Ayali-Darshan suggests, the initial scene involves tribute given by the divine council to Sea; this is not successful. The scene recalls some features of KTU 1.2 I where the messengers of Sea demand Baʿal as a captive, and he is surrendered with the divine council’s head, El, declaring that all the gods must give tribute to Sea (1.2 IV 36-38). The divine council then tries to make their offer more palatable to Sea by sending it with Astarte, who upon hearing the news weeps, which seems to militate against the notion of her as his consort. She goes to Sea and when he sees her, “singing and laughing.” This behavior Ayali-Darshan takes to be a matter of seduction and allure. Sea addresses her as an “angry and raging goddess,” which seems to fly in the face of an effort at seduction. After a lacuna, Sea is giving Astarte instructions about what to say before the Ennead: “If they give to me Your [daughter(?)...] them. What would I do against them for my part?” Ayala-Darshan takes this question as an indication as Sea’s interest in Astarte; it also assumes the correctness of the lacuna’s reconstruction. The text, after this point, involves no interaction between Sea and Astarte, and it seems that the tribute was not successful, as it appears to concern the theme of conflict between Sea and Seth. From this ending, one might surmise that Astarte is not represented as a consort of Yamm. The text is unclear in either direction. In sum, this text seems to be a poor basis for positing a particular relationship between Astarte and Yamm in Levantine tradition.

To this story, Ayali-Darshan would add as evidence “the Tale of the Two Brothers.”[149] To be sure, the story is set in Lebanon, and it involves two divine brothers who suffer a conflict, but there is no indication as such of the goddess Astarte. Ayali-Darshan further notes Hurro-Hittite sources, specifically “The Song of Hedamu,” which does indeed involve a figure of Ishtar who may be little other than Astarte. However, these sources involve no seduction or allure directed by the goddess at the Sea. Ayali-Darshan then notes the Ugaritic evidence, and its general lack of any indication of Astarte and the Sea.

Ayali-Darshan also turns to the evidence from Emar. The evidence here involves the goddess’ epithet, Ashtart *ša abi* (e.g., Emar 153:2; 274:9; 373:92; 384:2; 452:3; 460:26; 470:2). In addition, in one text Ashtart *ša abi* receives offering preceding an offering made to the Sea (Emar 460:26). It was the view of the Daniel Arnaud, the author of the *editio princeps*, that *abi* here refers to the sea. However, this reading has not met with general acceptance. In his detailed treatment of two of the texts in question (Emar 373[150]

[149] For translation and prior treatments, see Miriam Lichtheim, *COS* 1.85-89.

[150] Emar 373, treatment in Fleming, *Time at Emar*, 234-57.
Line 12 Astarte of combat
Line 78 Astarte of return (?)

and 452[151]), Daniel E. Fleming has proposed instead that Ashtart *ša abi* is "probably the patron of the *abû* shrines and of the month named Abî."[152] Later Fleming notes the varied interpretations of the title. He himself favors "fathers," since one of the legal documents renders this title with a double consonant marking the word as the plural for "fathers."[153] Fleming does not discount the association of the goddess and the Sea,[154] but he denies that this would mean that this title of the goddess refers to the sea, as Ayali-Darshan proposes.

The juxtaposition of the goddess with this title along with the god, Sea, is another matter. It does occur at Emar (460:26; 469:26). With regard to the evidence, here Ayali-Darshan appears to be on firmer ground. Following W. G. Lambert,[155] she notes the offerings made to the two deities together in one Mari text. In some respect, this evidence seems more compelling than any other presently attested material. At the same time, it represents a rather sparse basis for concluding that ʿAshtart was the consort of Yamm. However, it is hardly impossible, and in fact it would make good sense in cultic traditions where the goddess had temples located on coastal sites. One may suspect that the literature represents this relationship in a variety of manners, not simply as a spousal one but also as a potentially antagonistic one. It may be that different gods competed for her.

3.2.4. *ʿAthtart in the Household of El*

Relatively little has been made by scholars of ʿAthtart's place in the household of El. As noted earlier, KTU 1.114 pairs ʿAthtart with Anat within the scene of El's household. KTU 1.92, it was also seen, shows ʿAthtart providing game for El and Yarih. Neither text provides much sense of Athtart within El's household. Thankfully, line 3 in the new hymn to Athtart presented in the next section provides further information on this score: *tṣpq lḥt d gr ỉl*, "May she shut the jaw of El's attackers." Pardee translated line 3: "She has banged shut the maw of the whelp of El." In his scenario, ʿAthtart is oppo-

Line 92 Ashtart *ša abi* and to Yammu

[151] Emar 452; treatment of the text in Fleming, *Time at Emar*, 280-89.

day 3: offering to Ashtart *ša abi*, lines 3-5
day 14: offering to Ashtart *ša šubi*, lines 9-10, 14
offering to Ashtart *ša biriqati*, line 15
offering to Ashtart *ša abi*, line 17
day 16: entry with Ashtart, line 19
hunt of Ashtart, lines 20-21

See also Fleming, *Time at Emar*, 176, 179, 181-83. The different Ashtart's represent separate cult centers, according to Fleming, *Time at Emar*, 181.

[152] Daniel E. Fleming, *Time at Emar*, 181, 186-87. See also his review of the matter in *The Installation*, 300. Note also J. C. Oliva, "Ashtarte (ša) abi of Emar: A Basic Approach," *NABU* 1993/94 (1993) 78-80.

[153] Fleming, *Time at Emar*, 186-87.

[154] Fleming, *Time at Emar*, 187 n. 200.

[155] W.G. Lambert, "The Pantheon of Mari," *MARI* 4 (1985), 535-37.

nent to El's "whelp," a figure that Pardee compares with the various divine enemies of Baʿal associated with El in KTU 1.3 III 43-46. For line 3, Pardee also compares the filial duties in Aqhat (KTU 1.17 I 28-29, II 2-3, 18-19, and reconstructed for 1.17 I 47), which include to "shut the jaw of his (father's) detractors." As Pardee observed, the direct object in particular suggests a parallel reading here in line 3 of the hymn to the goddess. However, this parallel would suggest that the direct object represents enemies of El and not his own favored creatures (such as the cosmic enemies named in 1.3 III cited by Pardee). So *gr* may be rendered here not as "whelp" (as Pardee translates the word), but as "enemy" (cf. *gr*, "to attack," in KTU 1.119:26; BH **gwr*).

In this interpretation, this text casts ʿAthtart in the role of filial defender of the patriarch and his household. In Aqhat, this role is represented as a typically male role, namely a duty of the son. In the hymn to ʿAthtart, it is the goddess. What we see here may be another inversion of roles between the human and divine spheres. Where most divine roles are maintained along human gender lines, we noted above an inversion in the roles of hunting and warfare, where human women are not expected to play a role but where divine females excel. The protection of the divine household here may reflect a comparable inversion between the divine and human levels.

Before leaving this subject, I would point to a possible iconographic representation of this theme involving a ceramic box from Tel Rehov (Area C, Building F, stratum IV, ninth century; Fig. 1).[156] Measuring 15 inches wide and 11 inches in height, the box on its top-front edge an animal figure lying in a prone position, with its front limbs outstretched. The end of each limb is represented with nails extended and set on a human head. The deeply cut rendered paws and nails of the crouching animals of the Tel Rehov model shrine recall the "deeply cut, schematically rendered paws"[157] on the Tanaach stand with the two series of crouching lions. Although the head of the animal on the Tel Rehov model is unclear, the extended nails on the depiction of the crouching animal representation point to a leonine figure. According to the excavators Amihai Mazar and Nava Panitz-Cohen, the open mouth and dangling tongue are also commonly leonine motifs.[158] The gender meant to be represented in unclear. Under these figures, the box has a large opening, which suggests either the modeling of the entrance of a shrine or perhaps the opening for the placement of a divine image within the box.[159] Mazar and

156 Photographs for the shrine and the animal figure on it appear in Ami Mazar and Nava Panitz-Cohen, "A Few Artistic and Ritual Artifacts from the Iron Age at Tel Rehov," *Qadmoniot* 40/134 (2007), 96-102, here 101. See also Mazar and Panitz-Cohen, "To What God? Altars and a House Shrine from Tel Rehov Puzzle Archaeologists," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 34/4 (2008), 40-47, esp. 40-41, 45-46. For another picture with a brief discussion, see Amihai Mazar, "Reḥov, Tel," in *NEAEHL Supplementary Volume*, 2015-16, and plate VII for a color photograph. The figure has a lump on its back, which has not been explained. The stand is currently on exhibit in the Israel Museum.

157 Beck, *Imagery and Representation*, 399.

158 Mazar and Panitz-Cohen, "To What God?" 45.

159 Mazar and Panitz-Cohen ("To What God?" 46) compare the Middle Bronze shrine from

Panitz-Cohen suggest that the religious-artistic background is pre-Israelite and Syrian.[160] They conclude: "The entire creation seems to have been a local product, tailor-made for a specific local ritual. We cannot know if a mythological or some other narrative prompted this dramatic scene."[161] The Iron IIA ceramic box from Tel Rehov and its leonine representation are difficult to interpret. If the box is meant to symbolize either a shrine model or a box for a divine image to be housed, then the leonine figure seems to guard against inimical human intrusion. In this depiction, the leonine figure exercizes power against the human figures. Thus a deity with a leonine emblem animal may be involved. It would appear to constitute a scene of the deity represented by her or his emblem animal threatening humans. The position of the nails set on the two human heads might constitute an iconographical analogue to RIH 98/02, line 3, noted above: "May you/she shut the jaw of El's attackers" (*tṣpq lḥt d gr i̊l)*; and as we will see in the next section, the goddess there is represented in terms of a lion and panther. To be sure, the iconographic representation of nails positioned on human heads differs from the textual reference to the jaws of human enemies. Still, both iconography and text would represent aggressive action taken by the animal entity against enemies.

The several associations of ʿAthtart with other deities seem to represent a quintessentially West Semitic phenomenon. The best evidence for these associations appear in the Ugaritic texts and to some extent in Egyptian sources that seem dependent on West Semitic tradition. The same may be said of the one such association seen in the Emar material, namely Baʿal and Ashtart as consorts. This single instance at Emar supports Fleming's view that this notion is a Levantine import to Emar. In turn, the situation there at Ugarit and Emar may suggest that ʿAthtart is particularly grounded in the coastal Levant, a point to which we will return at the end of this essay. At this point, we turn to the goddess' attribute animal.

4. Attribute[162] *Animal*

The attribute-animal of ʿAthtart has been a longstanding issue. A number of scholars[163] have argued for this goddess as the "lion-lady" (an expression

Ashkelon that contained a statue of a calf.

160 Mazar and Panitz-Cohen, "To What God?" 41.

161 Mazar and Panitz-Cohen, "To What God?" 45-46.

162 "Attribute animal" is common in the work of Pierre Amiet, *Corpus des cylindres de Ras Shamra – Ougarit II: Sceaux-cylindres en hématite et pierres diverses* (RSO IX; Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1992), 68; and *Art of the Ancient Near East* (trans. J. Shepley and C. Choquet; New York: Abrams, 1980), 440 n. 787. For this phenomenon, there is the indigenous Akkadian word *simtu*, "characteristic, insignia" (something considered suitable), used to describe what the lioness is relation to Ishtar: "he harnessed for her (Ishtar), the seven lions, symbol of her divinity" (*CAD L*: 24). For other examples of *simtu* in this usage, see *CAD S*: 279, #1b.

163 See below for Frank M. Cross and Michael L. Barré in support of this identification.

to which we will return shortly). Thankfully, more recent Ugaritic evidence helps to clarify the matter. The text in question is RIH 98/02, a partially published hymn to ʿAthtart.[164] The first five lines read:

1	*šm ʿṯtrt ql yšr*	The name of ʿAthtart may my voice sing,
2	*iḏmr lbỉ šm lbỉ*	May I praise the name of the lioness.
	šm tkšd l	O name, may you be victorious...
3	*tṣpq lḥt d gr ỉl*	May you/she shut the jaw of El's attackers.
4	*nmr ḥṯrt ʿṯtrt*	A mighty[165] panther[166] is ʿAthtart,
5	*nmr ḥṯrt trqṣ*	A mighty panther that pounces.

All treatments, Lewis' and mine here included, are highly dependent on Pardee's edition of these lines, especially with respect to the epigraphic readings and the basic understanding. As befitting a hymn, there seems to be three

164 The fundamental treatment is Dennis Pardee, "A New Ugaritic Song to ʿAthartu (RIH 98/02)," in *Ugarit at Seventy-Five* (edited by K. Lawson Younger Jr.; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007); and "Deux tablettes ougaritiques de la main d'un meme scribe, trouvées sur deux sites distinct: RS 19.039 et RIH 98/02," *Semitica et Classica* 1 (2008), 9-38, esp. 11-13, which have been followed closely by Theodore J. Lewis, "ʿAthtartu's Incantations," forthcoming in *JNES*. My translation differs in some details, noted below.

165 Or, "fierce," so W. G. E. Watson, "Non-Semitic Words in the Ugaritic Lexicon (7)," *UF* 40 (2008), 551-52.

166 Pardee's translation. BH *nāmēr* is taken as "panther" in *BDB*, 649, but it also may refer to a leopard in Jeremiah 12:13, where it is said to have spots. Akkadian *nimru* denotes panther or leopard; so *AHw* 790; and Simo Parpola, ed., *Assyrian-English-Assyrian Dictionary* (Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2007), 76 sub *nemru*. *CAD N/II*:234-35 lists the meaning "panther," although one of the examples is said to be spotted. See also the comparison of this passage with Jeremiah 12:13 by Hayim ben Yosef Tawil, *An Akkadian Lexical Companion for Biblical Hebrew: Etymological-Semantic and Idiomatic Equivalents with Supplement on Biblical Hebrew* (New York: KTAV, 2009), 241, which renders "panther." For Aramaic *nmr'*, "panther," see *DNWSI*, 733 (KAI 222A 31, 223A 9, Ahiqar lines 118-119).
See Arabic *namir*, "leopard, tiger," in Hans Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic* [ed. J. M. Cowan; third edition; Ithaca, NY: Spoken Languages Services, 1976) 1000; and Ethiopic, *namr*, "leopard," according to Wolf Leslau, *Comparative Dictionary of Geʿez (Classical Ethiopic*) (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1987), 398, with cognates. Cf. Arabic *nimir*/*nimr*, "leopard," used for bravery, according to R. B. Serjeant, *South Arabian Hunt* (London: Luzac, 1976), 38, citing the Arabic expression *anā anmar minnak*, "I am more courageous than you are."
The word may denote panther or leopard in Sabean; see Joan Copeland Biella, *Dictionary of Old South Arabic: Sabaean Dialect* (HSS 25; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982), 307. See also Albert Jamme, *Sabaean Inscriptions from Maḥram Bilqîs (Mârib)* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1962), 339, who also discusses whether or not the word is used as military terminology. For the question of whether the word is used for "adversary" or the like, see J. Ryckmans, "Himaritica, IV," *Le Muséon* 87 (1974), 507-8; and Biella, *Dictionary of Old South Arabic*, 307.
For ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern iconography of the leopard, see Nadine Nys and Joachim Bretschneider, "Research on the Iconography of the Leopard," *UF* 39 (2007), 555-615.

bicola in lines 1-5, each with parallelism.[167] This has guided the translation above for lines 1-2, which may contain a first-person referent (cf. Pardee's rendering of line 1: "May the name of ʿAthtaru be sung").

For line 2b, Pardee proposes: "by (her) name she is victorious over." Pardee's translation arguably involves two issues: the lack of "her," and a preposition corresponding to "by" (cf. *bšm* in KTU 1.2 IV 28), though Pardee's translation is hardly impossible. To obviate this difficulty, it seems simpler to take "name" as vocative.[168] Line 3 has been discussed in the preceding section. The parallelism of lines 4-5 might suggest an asyndetic relative clause, although Pardee's rendering is possible ("(As) a mighty panther does she pounce").

Overall lines 1-3 of RIH 98/02 emphasize the goddess and her name. Lewis ties this use of "name" with her title as "the name of Baʿal" (as discussed above). One may compare the personal name, *šmlbỉ* (KTU 4.63 IV 13). Given the usage in RIH 98/02, this personal name would appear to refer to ʿAthtart as the lioness (cf. *šmlbủ* in KTU 4.366:13, 14; note also *šmbʿl* in 4.116:7, 4.682:8; and Amorite *su-mu-la-ba*).[169] Line 2 also calls her "lioness," which fits with the metaphor for her in lines 4-5 comparing her with a "panther." Pardee notes comparative evidence for related goddesses as leonine figures[170]:

i. Mesopotamian Ishtar associated with the lion (for *labbatu* as Ishtar's epithet, Old Akkadian, Old Babylonian, Standard Babylonian, see *CAD L*:23a; see also PN Ištar-la-ba, "Ishtar is a lion," *CAD L*:25A; cf. "he harnessed for her (Ishtar) the seven lions, symbol of her divinity," *CAD L*:24b)[171]
ii. Tannit, whose name appears in tandem with ʿAshtart, is sometimes represented as lion-headed.
iii. The thrice-named goddess (Astarte-Anat-Qdšt) on the Winchester plaque stands on a lion.
iv. Astarte is identified with a number of Egyptian leonine goddesses.

This new hymn to ʿAthtart, RIH 98/02, provides the first clear evidence for the West Semitic goddess as a lioness. This evidence would tend to sup-

[167] Pardee, "Deux tablettes," 12: "Malgré l'état délabré des deux textes, on y trouve des éléments de parallélisme, surtout dans le cinq premières lignes de RIH 98/02, conservés presque intégralement."

[168] I wish to thank Steve Fassberg, who suggested this possibility to me.

[169] Herbert B. Huffmon, *Amorite Personal Names in the Mari Texts: A Structural and Lexical Study* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1965), 225 and 248; and Ignace J. Gelb, *Computer-Aided Analysis of Amorite* (Assyriological Studies 21; Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1980), 354.

[170] Pardee, "A New Ugaritic Song to ʿAthartu (RIH 98/02)," 33-35.

[171] For the iconography of Ishtar as a lioness, see I. Cornelius, "The Lion in the Art of the Ancient Near East: A Study of Selected Motifs," *JNWSL* 15 (1989), 59-61; and Brent A. Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion? Leonine Image and Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East* (OBO 212; Fribourg: Academic Press; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005), 208-10.

port claims of related imagery as belonging to this goddess (although other goddesses associated with conflict cannot be definitively excluded). ʿAthtar seems to be called *lbủ* in KTU 1.24:30 (see also 1.2 III 20), which if correctly understood would fit with this evidence for ʿAthtart, as suggested by Frauke Gröndahl.[172]

This identification may hold implications for the PN "servant of the Lioness," *ʿbdlbʾt* in the old Canaanite arrowheads[173] and *ʿbdlbỉt* in Ugaritic (KTU 4.63 III 38).[174] This name type, **ʿbd* plus divine name/title, is common in West Semitic languages.[175] In the Amarna letters, it appears in the name of not only the famous Abdi-Ashirti, but also of the lesser-known Abdi-Ashtarti (EA 63:3, 64:3, 65:3). Given the structure of the name *ʿbdlbʾt*, it has long been thought that the element **lbʾt*, "lioness," is a title for a goddess. In 1954 Frank Moore Cross suggested Athirat as the goddess in question, based largely on his assumption that Athirat is to be identified with Qudshu, based on the Winchester plaque that names Qudshu with Astarte and Anat,[176] and with Qudshu represented as standing on a lion on Egyptian stelas dedicated to her at Deir el-Medinah.[177] It is to be noted that Cross also entertained ʿAthtart and Anat as possibilities. Michael L. Barré arrived at an identifica-

[172] So Gröndahl, *Die Personnamen der Texte aus Ugarit* (Studia Pohl 1; Rom: Päpstliches Bibelinstitut, 1967), 154. To be sure, any number of strong gods might be called lion; cf. Emar PN La'bu-Dagan, said to be in the Akkadian onomasticon in Regine Pruzsinszky, *Die Personnenamen der Text aus Emar* (Studies on the Civilization and Culture of Nuzi and the Hurrians 13; Bethesda, MD: CDL Press, 2003), 196 and n. 460.

[173] See Frank Moore Cross, *Leaves from an Epigrapher's Notebook: Collected Papers in Hebrew and West Semitic Palaeography and Epigraphy* (HSS 51; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 200-2, 217-18, 304; Richard S. Hess, "Arrowheads from Iron Age: Personal Names and Authenticity," in *Ugarit at Seventy-Five* (ed. K. L. Younger; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 113-129, esp. 119-20; and Hess, "Israelite Identity and Personal Names from the Book of Judges," *Hebrew Studies* 44 (2003), 38.

[174] See also Huffmon, *Amorite Personal Names*, 225.

[175] For Ugaritic, see *PTU* 104-6.

[176] The approach assumes that a third goddess stands behind the word Qudshu. See also Zevit, *The Religions of Ancient Israel*, 323-24 n. 133. For an entirely different approach, W. Helck followed by Eduard Lipiński, took Qud(a)shu to be originally an amulet or "holy object" that secondarily became a goddess. See Lipiński, *Resheph: A Syro-Canaanite Deity* (OLA 181; Studia Phoenicia XIX. Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 2009), 181, 198-203. Weakening this proposal is the relatively late date for the evidence that Lipinski cites for this word in referring to an amulet (eighth century and later) compared with the older Egyptian evidence for the female figure marked with the word. See further Zevit, *The Religions of Ancient Israel*, 323 n. 131.

[177] See Cross, *Leaves*, 305. See also Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 33-35. Earlier J. T. Milik and Frank Moore Cross pointed to the ambiguous identification of *lbʾt* ("the lioness") on the ʾEl-Ḥadr arrowheads as ʾAthirat/ʾAsherah, ʿAthtart/Ishtar/ʿAshtart/Astarte or ʿAnat ("Inscribed Javelin-Heads from the Period of the Judges: A Recent Discovery in Palestine," *BASOR* 134 [1954], 5-15, esp. 6-9; but cf. Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 33-34, where he favors an identification with ʾAthirat/ʾAsherah. See also Anthony J. Frendo, "A New Punic Inscription from Zejtun [Malta] and the Goddess Anat-Astarte," *PEQ* 131 (1999), 24-35; and R. A. Oden, Jr., *Studies in Lucian's* De Syria Dea (HSM 15; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1977), 58-107.

tion with ʿAthtart largely based on the following logic: Ishtar is a lioness, Ishtar is identified with ʿAshtart; therefore she is the best candidate for West Semitic lion-lady.[178] The identification of specific goddesses with the lion has attracted criticism, in particular from Steve A. Wiggins.[179] As his survey indicated, the major problem in the claim was the weakness of the evidence. This lack has now been somewhat surmounted. In the personal names in the arrowheads, the goddess Astarte would be a deity referenced, along with the goddess, Anat (in the PN *bn ʿnt*). The two goddesses and not only ʿAnat may be divine patrons of the warriors in the arrowheads. This evidence may hold implications also for some further leonine iconography associated with a goddess. This matter lies beyond the scope of the discussion at this point.

5. *ʿAthtart's International Contacts with Other Goddesses*

Cross-cultural recognition of deities was commonplace in the Late Bronze Age.[180] Such recognition raises the question as to how distinctive in the minds of the ancients some of these representations of ʿAthtart/ʿAshtart were relative to Ishtar and perhaps other goddesses. We might consider the possibility of seeing a spectrum running from little or no distinction (e.g., in the writing of the goddess in one language as referring to the goddess otherwise known in another language), to some level of identification, to clear distinction. Many of the examples noted in this section have been discussed for other reasons in preceding sections of this study. The cases addressed here involve: (i) correspondences of Ugaritic ʿAthtart with ʾUshḫara/ʾIshḫara and Ishtar at Ugarit; (ii) ʿAthtart *šd* as the local Ugaritic form of Akkadian Ishtar *ṣēri*; (iii) ʿAthtart of Ugarit at Mari; (iv) Ugaritic ʿAthtart and Hurrian Shaushga at Ugarit; and (v) ʿAshtoret and the Queen of Heaven in Israel.

5.1. Ugaritic ʿAthtart with ʾUshḫara/ʾIshḫara and Ishtar in Ugaritic deity-lists and a ritual text

We begin with the listings of deities in deity-lists and in ritual texts. The first involves the listings of deities appear in four texts: two Ugaritic deity-lists,

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178 Barré, *The God-List in the Treaty*, 69.

179 Wiggins, "The Myth of Asherah: Lion Lady and Serpent Goddess," *UF* 23 (1991), 383-94, repr. in Wiggins, *A Reassessment of Asherah: With Further Considerations of the Goddess* (Gorgias Ugaritic Studies 2; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2007), 223-37; see also Wiggins, *A Reassessment*, 131 and 280, where he notes without criticism the support of Judith M. Hadley for Asherah's association with the lions on the Pella stand. See Hadley, *The Cult of Asherah in Ancient Israel and Judah* (University of Cambridge Oriental Publications 57; Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 169, 183.

180 For this matter, see Mark S. Smith, *God in Translation: Deities in Cross-Cultural Discourse in the Biblical World* (Forschungen zum Alten Testament I/57; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008; republished, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 37-90.

KTU 1.47 (RS 1.017), and KTU 1.118 (RS 24.264), an Akkadian deity-list from Ugarit, RS 20.024, and the order of deities as they appear in the Ugaritic ritual text, KTU 1.148 (RS 24.643), specifically in lines 1-9.[181] These four texts suggests two sets of correspondences involving ʿAthtart: [*ủ*]*šḫry* = *ủšḫry* = ^{d}*iš-ḫa-ra* = *ʿṯtrt*. The second [*ʿ*]*ṯtrt* = *ʿṯtrt* = ^{d}EŠDAR$^{\text{iš-tar}}$ = *ủšḫry*.[182] In the first, ʾUshḫara/ʾIshḫara,[183] a goddess in the Hurrian pantheon with an old Syrian origin,[184] is listed as a goddess in the two Ugaritic lists and in the syllabic text; only in the fourth text, the ritual context of KTU 1.148:7, does the name of ʿAthtart instead appear. In the correspondences in the following line of the same set of texts, it is ʿAthtart named in the two Ugaritic texts who corresponds with the Mesopotamian Ishtar in the syllabic text and with the Hurrian goddess in the Ugaritic ritual text.[185] The two listings show ʿAthtart's correlation with major goddesses from two other regions. They raise questions about the nature of correspondence of ʿAthtart vis-à-vis these two other goddesses.[186]

5.2. ʿAthtart of Ugarit at Mari

Beyond the polyglot lists, there are a number of references in Ugaritic to the goddess outside Ugarit. The first section of this essay above notes a scribal addition made to KTU 1.100:77-18. This is an instruction to add the follow-

[181] See Pardee, *Les textes rituels*,1.291-319.

[182] This information is taken from *RCU* 14-15 and Pardee, *Les textes rituels* (2 vols.; RSO XII; Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 2000) 1.291-319, esp. 292. See also the listing in del Olmo Lete, *Canaanite Religion*, 71-82, 131-34.

[183] According to Pardee's listing in *RCU* 18, a second set of parallel listings at Ugarit includes the name of the goddess: RS 92.2004 (an Akkadian deity-list) and the Ugaritic ritual, KTU 1.148:23-44 (in line 38), not attested in the parallel Ugaritic deity-list, KTU 1.118 (RS 24.264). It is to be noted that the name of ʿAthtart in 1.148.38 is mostly reconstructed (it does not appear at all in KTU).

[184] *RCU* 285, citing Alfonso Archi, "How a Pantheon Forms: The Cases of Hattian-Hittite Anatolia and Ebla of the 3rd Millennium B.C.," in *Religionsgeschichtliche Beziehungen zwischen Kleinasien, Nordsyrien und dem Alten Testament. Internationales Symposion Hamburg 17.-21. März 1990* (ed. Bernd Janowski, Klaus Koch, and Gernot Wilhelm; OBO 129; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), 1-18. See also Fleming, *The Installation*, 226-27, 252-53; and note D. Prechel, *Die Göttin Išḫara: ein Beitrag zur orientalischen Religionsgeschichte* (ALASP 11; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1996). Fleming (*Time at Emar*, 73 n. 97, 153 n. 43) also discusses this goddess at Emar. Elsewhere at Ugarit the Hurrian goddess is attested, for example in a Hurrian text (KTU 1.131:1-2) that refers to *ủšḫr mryt*, "Ishhara the Mari-ite." The goddess in this particular context is being recognized for her manifestation at Mari. See Manfried Dietrich and Walter Mayer, "Sprache und Kultur der Huriter in Ugarit," in *Ugarit: Ein ostmediterranes Kulturzentrum im Alten Orient. Ergebnisse und Perspektiven der Forschung. Band I: Ugarit und seine altorientalische Umwelt* (ed. Manfried Dietrich and Oswald Loretz; ALASP 7; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1995), 22, 24.

[185] Pardee, *Les textes rituels*, 1.307.

[186] Cf. the expressions of such from other cultures, discussed in Smith, *God in Translation*, 88-89 and n. 223.

ing insertion: "after Rashap is ʿAthtart: (recite) ʿ(take a message) to ʿAthtart to Mari, the incantation of the bite of the snake (etc.)'."[187] The home of this goddess is given as Mari. This may reflect an acknowledgement that ʿAthtart was known and distinguished from Ishtar at Mari. As noted above, the goddess under the distinctive name ᵈ*aštarrat* is the recipient of a votive offering at Mari.[188]

5.3. ʿAthtart šd *as the local Ugaritic form of Akkadian Ishtar* ṣēri

As noted above in section II, one correspondence of the goddess with Ishtar involves her representation as ʿAthtart *šd*, "ʿAthtart of the field" (KTU 1.91:10; 1.148:18; 4.182:55, 58). For the purposes of this section, it is interesting to see this deity-translation of ʿAthtart and Ishtar at Ugarit itself. The Akkadian counterpart at Ugarit is of further importance, as it appears in an international context involving the courts of Carchemish and Ugarit. Ishtar *ṣēri* is attested further afield, for example at Hatti.[189] It would appear that this form of the goddess was known across northern Syria and Hatti. The Ugaritic form looks like a local translation of Ishtar *ṣēri*. Accordingly, Ugarit would appear to attest to both the international form Ishtar *ṣēri* as well as her local Ugaritic form ʿAthtart *šd*.

5.4. Ugaritic ʿAthtart and Hurrian Shaushga at Ugarit

An Ugaritic-Hurrian correspondence involving the goddess appears in a text at Ugarit. KTU 1.116 has two lines in Ugaritic, with the remainder of the text in Hurrian. Lines 1-2 opens: *dbḥ ʿṯtrt qrảt bgrn*, "Sacrifice of ʿAthtaru, a convening at (literally, in) on the threshing floor."[190] Line 3 follows with "Sacrifice for Tha'uthka." The headings suggest an identification made here between the West Semitic goddess, ʿAthtart, and the Hurrian goddess, whose

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[187] See above, section I, for further discussion.

[188] W.G. Lambert, "The Pantheon of Mari," *MARI* 4 (1985), 535-37; Pardee, *Les textes rituels*, 1.308.

[189] For example, see Alfonso Archi, "Kizzuwatna amid Anatolian and Syrian Cults," in *Anatolia Antica: Studi in memoria di Fiorelli Imparati* (ed. Stefano de Martino and Franca Pecchioli Daddi; Firenze: LoGisma editore, 2002), 49, citing KUB XX 1 (CTH 719). See also "Ishtar of the field," in one of Muwatalli's prayers, CTH 381, ii 60-61, in Itamar Singer, *Hittite Prayers* (ed. Harry Hoffner, Jr.; SBLWAW 11; Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 2002), 90, para. 55; and in many Hittite treaty texts, in Gary Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts* (ed. Harry Hoffner, Jr.; SBLWAW 7; Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1996), 3, para. 8; 7, para. 15; 8, para. 19; 9, para. Q8; 12, para. 16; 13, para. 18; 18C, para. 25.

[190] Cf. *RCU* 94: "Sacrifice of *ʿAṯtartu*, gathering at the threshing floor." Commenting on *qrảt*, Pardee (*RCU* 116 n. 151): "literally, a 'calling' (together)". The location *bgrn* is not the royal palace as such, but possibly in or at the royal palace (see line 8: "and in the house/temple").

name is spelled here as Ṯa'uṯka (in Akkadian texts, Shaushga).[191] In this connection we may note ʿAthtart *ḫr*, understood by many scholars to be ʿAthtart of Hurri"[192] and attested at Ugarit also as Ishtar [il]*ḫur-ri*, "Ishtar of Hurri" (e.g., RS 16.273:9, RS 18.01:3, 6).[193] She may be Shaushga.

[191] Pardee (*RCU* 93) calls her the Hurrian equivalent of ʿAthtart; see also del Olmo Lete, *Canaanite Religion*, 85.

[192] The identity of ʿAthtart *ḫr* has received a number of proposals: "Hurrian Ishtar" (Pardee, *RCU*, 275 and *Les textes rituels*, 1.223-25 among many commentators; see below); "ʿAthtartu of the tomb(s)" (del Olmo Lete, *Canaanite Religion*, 241 n. 77, based on Ugaritic *ḫrt* in KTU 1.5 VI 17-18); "Athtartu of the grotto/cavern" (Herdner, Ugaritica VII, 21-26); or, "Athtart of the window" (Emile Puech, "Le vocable d'*ʿAṯtart ḫurri – ʿštrt ḥr* à Ugarit et en Phénicie," *UF* 25 (1993), 327-30.
The first view remains the most prominent in the scholarly literature. See F. M. Cross, *Leaves from An Epigrapher's Notebook: Collected Papers in Hebrew and West Semitic Paleography and Epigraphy* (HSS 51; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 273-75; Pardee, *Les textes rituels*, 1.233-36 (with references); Corrine Bonnet, *Astarté: Dossier documentaire et perspectives historiques* (Contributi alla storia della religione fenicio-punica II; Rome: Consiglio nazionale delle ricerche, 1996), 127-31; for a photograph, see Bonnet, *Astarté*, plate X. In addition, to this evidence, Cross notes an Egyptian transcription from the Eighteenth Dynasty *ʾa-s-ta-ra-ḫu-ru* (with bibliography).
For Puech, there is no -y gentilic, thus it does not mean "Hurrian" (as in KTU 1.40:29, 37; cf. "Kassite Yarihu (*yrḫ kṯy*) in 1.39.19, 1.102.14, *RCU* 21, 69). Puech expects final *-t*, for the goddess as "Hurrian")? See further del Olmo Lete, *UF* 36 (2004), 577. Puech's view assumes a feminine adjectival form rather than a construct "Astarte of Hurri." Moreover, Puech's own proposal assumes *ḫr* as "window," which would otherwise be unattested in Ugaritic; cf. the common words for window or aperture, *ủrbt* and *ḥln*. It might be expected that the meaning proposed would apply in Akkadian and it does in Ugaritic. Again, *ḫr* is not known in this meaning in Akkadian. In short, despite considerable uncertitude on the matter, "Hurrian ʿAthtart" seems to remain the best proposal at present.
See also Phoenician *ʿštrtḥr* cited by Cross and Puech. It occurs twice, in an eighth century inscription on a bronze statuette of a naked goddess in Sevilla and in an inscription on a Phoenician crater. See Puech, "Le vocable d'Aṯtart ḫurri – *ʿštrt ḥr* à Ugarit et en Phénicie," *UF* 25 (1993), 327-30; Cross, *Leaves from An Epigrapher's Notebook: Collected Papers in Hebrew and West Semitic Paleography and Epigraphy* (HSS 51; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 273-75; Pardee, *Les textes rituels*, 1.233-36 (with references); Corrine Bonnet, *Astarté: Dossier documentaire et perspectives historiques* (Contributi alla storia della religione fenicio-punica II; Rome: Consiglio nazionale delle ricerche, 1996), 127-31, and plate X. In addition to this evidence, Cross notes an Egyptian transcription from the Eighteenth Dynasty *ʾa-s-ta-ra-ḫu-ru* (with bibliography).
Albright (*Yahweh*, 143, 149-150) and Cross (*Leaves*, 274) propose that these references are to Ishtar of Nineveh. However, Ishtar of Nineveh is distinguished in the Akkadian textual record from Ugarit (e.g., RS 19.101:7, PRU IV, 288; cf. Shawushka of Nineveh in the Hurrian text, KTU 1.54:2-3).

[193] PRU III, 171: a person placed in administrative service is said to be "given to [il]*ištar ḫur-ri*". There is a dispute over the translation; see the preceding note concerning *ʿštrt ḥr*; corresponding to the view that Ugaritic *ḫr* and Akkadian *ḫur-ri* in these cases means "Hurri" (or Hurrians), see *[d]Da-gan ša ḫur-ri*, "Dagan of Hurri," for example, in "The year: Shunuhru-Ammu the king poured a libation to Dagan of the Hurrians." See Amanda H. Podany, *The Land of Hana: Kings, Chronology, and Scribal Tradition* (Bethesda, MD: CDL Press, 2002), 53, 108. In addition, see Lackenbacher, *Textes akkadiens d'Ugarit*, 254 n. 869 (partially influenced by question of whether or not *ku-na-ḫi* in this context is a Hurrian word). RS 18.01:3, 6 in PRU IV, 230; Lackenbacher, *Textes akkadiens d'Ugarit*, 141; McLaugh-

5.5. ʿAshtart in Israel

While this study has focused on Late Bronze Levantine evidence for the goddess, we may close with a consideration of later correspondences of the goddess and how these might serve to put into context the few biblical references to ʿAshtart that we presently know for ancient Israel. The goddess shows correspondences not only in Akkadian and Hurrian in Late Bronze Age sources, but also in later Phoenicia[194] and Cyprus.[195] As we will see, ancient Israel was not entirely immune to the influence of the goddess.

In surveys of this goddess in ancient Israel, scholars point to her general demise within Israelite circles, based on the lack of clear evidence for ʿAshtart as an Israelite goddess. I have noted above that the Ugaritic evidence for the lion as ʿAthtart's attribute animal may in turn point to this goddess underlying the PNs with "servant of the Lion" in arrowheads. Accordingly, one might posit the presence of the goddess in earliest Israel (end of the Late Bronze Age and into the Iron I), though the evidence is not particularly clear for Israel. Above we also noted a Late Bronze Age seal from Bethel with the name of the goddess in hieroglyphic writing. Otherwise, the record for the goddess is quite weak and thus several scholars posit a trend toward the

lin, *The marzēaḥ in the Prophetic Literature*, 17: "From this day, concerning the vineyards of the Hurrian Ishtar ([il]*ištar ḫur-ri*) which is in Shuksu, the vineyard of the Hurrian (?) Ishtar (is) between the men of the marzeah of Aru (in Ugarit) and between the men of the marzeah of Siyannu; man against man will not transgress. Seal of Padiya king of Siyannu" (adapted from McLaughlin). Ishtar hur-ri seems to be the divine patron of the marzeah-associations in both Ugarit and Siyannu.

194 Philo of Byblos: "The Phoenicians say that Astarte is Aphrodite" (*PE* 1.10.32; H. W. Attridge and R. A. Oden, Jr., *Philo of Byblos. The Phoenician History: Introduction, Critical Text, Translation, Note*s [CBQMS 9; Washington, DC: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1981], 54-55). Cf. *De Dea Syria*, paragraph 4, which identifies Astarte and Selene; for this text, see H. W. Attridge and R. A. Oden, *The Syrian Goddess (De Dea Syria) Attributed to Lucian* (SBLTT 9, Graeco-Roman Religion series 1; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1976), 12-13.

195 For example, *ʾštrt pp*, "ʿAshtart of Paphos," in RES 921.3-4 in Benz 386, Krahmalkov, *Phoenician-Punic Dictionary*, 392. This tradition is contained in the later identifications of the goddess in the *Metamorphoses* by Apuleius, the "Queen of Heaven," where she is invoked XI (2), by different names among different peoples:

> My divinity is one, worshipped by all the world under different forms, with various rites, and by manifold names. In one place, the Phrygians, first-born of men, call me Pessinuntine Mother of the Gods [Cybele], in another the autochthonous people of Attica call me Cecropian Minerva [Athene], in another the sea-washed Cyprians call me Paphian Venus [probably West Semitic Astarte]; to the arrow-bearing Cretans I am Dictynna Diana, to the trilingual Sicilians Ortygian Proserpina, to the ancient people of Eleusis Attic Ceres; some call me Juno, some Bellona, others Hecate, and still others Rhamnusia [Nemesis].

In her response to Lucius, the goddess finally reveals her "true name" (*Metamorphoses*, XI, 5): "the Egyptians who excel by having the original doctrine honor me with my distinctive rites and give me my true name of Queen Isis." For discussion, see Smith, *God in Translation*, 243-44. See also the important evidence noted by Saul M. Olyan, "Some Observations Concerning the Identity of the Queen of Heaven," *UF* 19 (1987), 168-69.

goddess' demise. Some evidence for this picture may be seen in the genericization of the name of the goddess as a term for goddesses and for fertility. The first usage is well known from Judges 2:13 and 10:6, but there are also extra-biblical references along these lines. For example, Othmar Keel and Christoph Uehlinger have pointed to an extraordinary example of this usage in an eight century Akkadian inscription from ʿAna on the middle Euphrates that describes Anat as "the strongest of the astartes" (goddesses).[196] Later genericizations of the goddess' name for goddesses more generally are also known.[197] The use of the goddess' name to refer to fertility (Deuteronomy 7:13, 28:4, 18, 51)[198] is in keeping with the parallel genericization of names of other deities (e. g., Resheph as "flame," and Deber as "pestilence").[199] The iconographic record has been read similarly by Keel and Uehlinger.[200] In reference to Shagar and Astarte, Keel and Uehlinger deduce that by "the tenth century these deities would not have been conceptualized as being equal to and independent of Yahweh, but would have been viewed as entities and powers of blessing under his control."[201] This overall trend seems to match the lack of attestation of the goddess in the Transjordanian kingdoms. The one clear example of the goddess in Ammonite identifies her as Phoenician: *ʿšt‹rt› bṣdn*, "ʿAshta‹rt› in Sidon."[202] Otherwise, she seems as foreign to the Transjordanian kingdoms as she is to ancient Israel. In other words, ʿAshtart

[196] Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses and Images of God* (trans. Thomas Trapp; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 105, citing Antoine Cavignaux and Bahija Khalil Ismail, "Die Statthalter von Suhu und Mari im 8. Jh. v. Chr. Anhand neuer Texte aus den irakischen Grabungen im Staugebiet des Qadia-Damms," *Baghdader Mitteilungen* 21 (1990), 321-456, here 380-81, no. 17, lines 1 and 3f.

[197] For the later genericization of *'/ʿystrt' nqbt*, for female goddesses" (as opposed to *ʾlhy dkry* for "male gods" in Aramaic incantations, see the discussion and citations in Joseph Naveh, *Studies in West-Semitic Epigraphy: Selected Papers* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 2009), 214. Naveh also cites a Nabatean text that uses *'ʿtry* (or ' + *ʿtry'*) for "gods."

[198] According to KTU 1.111:17-18, "seven ew‹es›" are characterized as "perfect ones of ʿAthtar of the field (*ʿṯtr šd*)" (see *RCU* 92, 93). There may be here an association of the flock to the deity in a manner that recalls the expression in Deuteronomy 7:13, 28:4, 18, 51. The connection would be even closer if the name of ʿAthtar in 1.111.18 were emended to ʿAthtart, not an entirely unreasonable suggestion given that the further designation *šd* is only elsewhere used for the goddess (KTU 1.91:10; 1.148:18; 4.182:55, 58, as discussed above) and not the god.

[199] For a survey of this phenomenon, see Judit M. Blair, *De-Demonising the Old Testament: An Investigation of Azazel, Lilith, Deber, Qeteb and Reshef in the Hebrew Bible* (FAT 2/37; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009).

[200] See Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 170, 174-75, 233. This conclusion stands in tension with Keel's claim that "the asherah tree or pole remained related to the goddess Asherah" (Keel, *Goddesses and Trees*, 55). No positive evidence is marshaled in defense of this claim.

[201] Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 149.

[202] See Walter E. Aufrecht, *A Corpus of Ammonite Inscriptions* (Ancient Near Eastern Texts & Studies Volume 4; Lewiston/Queenston/Lampeter, 1989), 147.

seems to be largely a coastal figure in the Iron Age (cf. the goddess as adopted by the Philistines, as suggested by 1 Samuel 31:10//1 Chronicles 10:10).[203]

Within the context of this picture, biblical texts represent two imports of the goddess into Israel. The first is traced in the biblical context to Phoenicia. 1 Kings 11:5 says that Solomon "followed" ("worshipped" in 1 Kings 11:33) ʿAshtoreth, god[204] of the Sidonians, as well as a number of other national gods (see also 2 Kings 23:13). The name ʿAshtoreth seems to reflect Phoenician ʿAshtart, evidently with the /o/ vowel shift characteristic of Phoenician[205] (in contrast to the reduced vowel in BH plural *ʿaštārôt*, in Judges 2:13, 10:6, 1 Samuel 7:3, 4, and 12:10).[206] As noted by Alan Cooper,[207] this shift vowel would not have taken place in Biblical Hebrew, and so the Hebrew spelling in this case points to a Phoenician import (unless the vocalization were secondary under the polemical influence of the BH *bōšet*, "shame").[208] Phoenician evidence for this goddess is known in the inscriptional record[209] as well as other sources.[210] Whether or not this representation of Solomon's

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203 This situation stands in contrast to that of ʿAshtar in the first millennium, who is attested at inland locales. See Smith, "The God Athtar in the Ancient Near East and His Place in KTU 1.6 I," 627-40. It would be tempting to suggest for the Iron Age situation a western emphasis for the goddess and an eastern one for the god with the corresponding name. In this connection, it may also be recalled that ʿAthtart has been thought to have connected with the evening star, just as ʿAthtar was connected with the morning star.

204 Or, perhaps generically, "deity"; cf. Phoenician *'lm* used for ʿAshtart (and also Isis) in KAI 48:2. See Krahmalkov, *Phoenician-Punic Dictionary*, 52.

205 For this Phoenician vowel shift, see W. Randall Garr, *Dialect Geography of Syria-Palestine, 1000-586 B.C.E.* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 33-35.

206 There is some confusion with respect to the name in the LXX.

207 Alan Cooper, "A Note on the Vocalization of עַשְׁתֹּרֶת," *ZAW* 102 (1990), 98-100.

208 A common view; see Day, "Ashtoreth," *ABD* I, 492.

209 For example, *lrbt lʿštrt wltnt blbnn* (KAI 81.1), "to the Ladies, to ʿAshtart and to Tannit in Lebanon." McCarter takes Tannit as the only referent for *blbnn*, while Krahmalkov, *PPD*, 391, sees this attribution to both "ladies."

See also *ʿšt‹rt› bṣdn*, "ʿAshta‹rt› in Sidon," preserved on an Ammonite seal. See Walter E. Aufrecht, *A Corpus of Ammonite Inscriptions* (Ancient Near Eastern Texts & Studies Volume 4; Lewiston/Queenston/Lampeter: Mellen, 1989), 147.

See also dedicatory inscriptions devoted to the goddess Astarte of Sidon in Spain and Cyprus, the religions of the distinctive Phoenician city-states were transported with them.

210 Josephus records an account derived from Menander of Ephesus in *Antiquities* VIII, 5, 3, para. 146 (cf. *Contra Apionem* I.119):

> These two kings are also mentioned by Menander, who translated the Tyrian records from the Phoenician language into Greek speech, in these words: "And on the death of Abibalos, his son Eiromos [Hiram] succeeded to his kingdom, who lived to the age of fifty-three and reigned thirty-four years. He it was who made the Eurychoros (Broad Place) embankment and set up the golden column in the temple of Zeus. Moreover, he went off and cut timber from the mountain called Libanos for the roofs of the temples, and pulled down the ancient temples and erected new ones to Heracles and Astarte.

H. St. J. Thackeray and R. Marcus, *Josephus V. Jewish Antiquities, Books V-VIII* (Loeb Classical Library; London: William Heinemann Ltd; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1934), 649-51. For *Contra Apionem*, see Thackeray, *Josephus I. The Life/Against*

practice derives from any historical kernel (perhaps Solomon's accommodation of the Phoenician cult of a consort) or is a secondary retrojection (perhaps under the later inspiration of Israelite reaction against Phoenician worship), the critique of the practice in 1 Kings 11 shows an awareness of a royal effort to provide a local accommodation for the cult of the Phoenician ʿAshtart. The goddess appears to be known to the biblical author, like the other national gods mentioned in this story.

The second apparent import is more difficult to spell out. It has been argued that the "Queen of Heaven," as known from Jeremiah 7:18 and 44:15-30, is ʿAshtart,[211] Ishtar, or a fusion (or a cross-cultural identification) of Ishtar and Astarte.[212] Saul M. Olyan sees the best case being for ʿAshtart and a possible though lesser case for Ishtar.[213] Susan Ackerman has argued that the Queen of Heaven was a combination of elements of West Semitic ʿAshtart and East Semitic Ishtar.[214] The influence of Ishtar is particularly suggested by BH *kawwānîm* as a loan from Akkadian *kamānu* in Jeremiah 7:14 and 44:19,[215] not to mention Ishtar's iconography attested in the region during this period.[216] The basis for West Semitic ʿAshtart in the late Iron II is not entirely clear, although Olyan notes suggestive comparative evidence. Ackerman presupposes the continuation of the West Semitic ʿAshtart within Israel, perhaps a popular or local cult.[217] This view could be supported by reference to the polemical attacks on the BH *baʿal/bĕʿālîm* and *ʿaštārôt*, in Judges 2:13, 10:6, 1 Samuel 7:3, 4, and 12:10 (often compared with Akkadian *ilāni u ištarāti* in its generic use for gods and goddesses). These refer-

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Apion (Loeb Classical Library; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: William Heineman, 1926), 209-11.

211 See Day, "Ashtoreth," *ABD* I, 492.

212 For these points, see Saul M. Olyan, "Some Observations Concerning the Identity of the Queen of Heaven," *UF* 19 (1987), 160-74; Susan Ackerman, *Under Every Green Tree: Popular Religion in Sixth-Century Judah* (HSM 46; Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1992); and "'And the Women Knead Dough': The Worship of the Queen of Heaven in Sixth-Century Judah," in *Gender and Difference in Ancient Israel* (ed. Peggy L. Day; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 109-24; Smith, *The Early History of God* (second edition), 126-32; and *God in Translation*, 162 n. 113 (with further bibliography). Cf. Teresa Ann Ellis, "Jeremiah 44: What if 'the Queen of Heaven' is YHWH?" *JSOT* 33 (2009), 465-88.

213 Olyan, "Some Observations," 174.

214 See the references in note 196.

215 See Paul V. Mankowski, S. J., *Akkadian Loanwords in Biblical Hebrew* (HSS 47; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2000), 61-62. Note also the older study of Moshe Held, "Studies in Biblical Lexicography in Light of Akkadian," *EI* 16 (1982), 76-85; and my discussion in *God in Translation*, 162 n. 113. Olyan ("Some Observations," 173) argues that such "cakes may have also have been typical of the cultus of the West Semitic" goddess as well as Ishtar. While this claim about the cakes is possibly true, the word itself for the cakes is not typical West Semitic and is suggestive of an East Semitic background.

216 Tallay Ornan, "Ištar as Depicted on Finds from Israel," in *Studies in the Archaeology of the Iron Age in Israel and Jordan* (ed. A. Mazar, with the assistance of G. Mathias; JSOT Sup 331; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 235-52.

217 See also Day, "Ashtoreth," *ABD* I, 492.

ences belong to the later tradents of these books, and may correspond to the period of the Jeremiah passages.

These *ʿaštārôt* are not represented as a matter of Phoenician importation, which would suggest the vestige of an older West Semitic cult, one that could be indigenous to early Israel. Even if this view of the attestation is correct, it may not suggest a widespread cult. To situate it in the context of the Iron II period, this older West Semitic cult of ʿAshtart in Israel have been a popular practice rather than a particularly royal one, and it also may have been relatively minor, until the Iron II period when neo-Assyrian influence of Ishtar may have increased its impact within Israelite religion, perhaps under the rubric of the Queen of Heaven. (Parenthetically, it may be noted that the old cult traditional cult of ʾAsherah, perhaps by this time more a matter of the symbol as Yahweh's asherah than a discrete symbol representing the goddess as such, may have been conflated with the somewhat similar sounding name of the goddess ʿAshtart,[218] perhaps now identified with the Queen of Heaven, evidently more a threat in this period than the goddess Asherah.) This is all very speculative. Still, if a general trend toward the demise of ʿAshtart's cult may be seen despite what may be vestiges of her name (at least), the issue remains: what was the reason for its demise?

We can only speculate based on a number of considerations noted in this study. The goddess is largely a coastal phenomenon in this period, while she seems to be fading in Israel and further inland. Her role of hunting is one that is represented rarely if at all in Israel, either for Israelites or for their national god. The literary description of hunting in Genesis 27 represents this activity as proper to Esau, but not Jacob. The text may reflect an Iron II "culture map" of Israel as a society little involved in hunting. No one claims or should clam that Genesis 27 is representative of Israelite practices, but it may represent a perception within some quarter of Israel's Iron II elite that hunting is not a particularly Israelite activity. Might the elite perception about the lack of Israelite hunting in this passage be correlated with the lack of witness to ʿAshtart in biblical texts?

A brief examination of the archaeological record for hunted animals might provide some insight on this question. The textual expression in Genesis 27 stands in tension with the archaeological evidence for hunted animals. Deer bones from the Iron I sanctuary on Mount Ebal point to their sacrifice.[219] A tenth century cultic structure at the site of Taanach yielded bones of some gazelle and/or roe deer and some fallow deer.[220] Deer and gazelle bones have

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[218] This might account for the reference in 2 Kings 23:4 to Asherah as a goddess (as opposed to the symbol by the same name). The references to the asherah in 2 Kings 21:7 and 23:6, 7 may refer to an elaborated, royal version of the symbol.

[219] For a critical discussion of the site, see Klaus Koenen, "Zum Stierbild von *Ḍahret eṭ-Tawīle* und zum Schlangen des Hörneraltars von *Tell es-Sebaʿ*," *BN* 121 (2004), 39-52.

[220] Frank Frick, *Tell Taannek 1963-1968 IV: Miscellaneous/2: The Iron Age Cultic Structure* (Birzeit: Palestinian Institute of Archaeology, 2000), 65-66.

been noted at the Dan sacred precinct,[221] but it is unclear as to whether these constituted part of the sacrifices as such.[222] Similar evidence for the Iron II shrine at Lachish has also been reported.[223] Despite problems in interpretation, it is apparent that the sacrificial cult included undomesticated species at some Israelite shrines, but perhaps not at the national shrine in Jerusalem where was also the site of textual production and transmission of many biblical texts bearing on the hunt as well as the goddess. According to Brian Hesse and Paula Wapnish, deer and gazelle are well documented for the diet from the Late Bronze Age through the Roman period.[224] What Paul Croft states about the situation at Lachish may well represent the larger picture in ancient Israel:

> Hunting was never of great importance in the economy, although the occurrence throughout the sequence of wild animals and birds indicates that it was a perennial pursuit. The numerous species of wild bird and a few species of wild mammal which are represented moderately frequently in the faunal assemblage were probably hunted reasonably locally. Such mammals include fallow deer, gazelles, hartebeest and fox.[225]

Sacralization of hunted game might well be expected, as with the food regimen generally. Following Oded Borowski,[226] it seems quite plausible to entertain the possibility that the meat of the hunt was sacrificed, thanks especially to the (albeit limited) archaeological evidence from Israelite shrines. Moreover, it may be suspected that hunted game was perhaps sacralized with prayers or blessings within the family context. Deuteronomy 14 permits slaughter of such undomesticated animals[227] outside of the temple sacrificial

221 Oded Borowski, "Animals in the Religion of Syria-Palestine," in *A History of the Animal World in the Ancient Near East* (ed. Billie Jean Collins; HdO 1/64; Leiden/Boston/Köln: Brill, 2002), 412; Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22* (AB 3A; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 1480; and Ziony Zevit, *The Religions of Ancient Israel: A Synthesis of Parallactic Approaches* (London/New York: Continuum, 2001), 181.

222 Brian Hesse, personal communication. See also Paula Wapnish and Brian Hesse, "Faunal Remains from Tel Dan: Perspectives on Animal Production at a Village, Urban and Ritual Center," *Archaeozoologica* 4/2 (1991), 9-86.

223 Borowski, "Animals in the Religion of Syria-Palestine," 412.

224 Hesse and Wapnish, "An Archaeozoological Perspective on the Cultural Use of Mammals in the Levant," in *A History of the Animal World in the Ancient Near East* (ed. Billie Jean Collins; HdO 1/64; Leiden/Boston/Köln: Brill, 2002), 483-91.

225 Croft, "Archaeozoological Studies," in *The Renewed Archaeological Excavations at Lachish (1973-1994)* (ed. David Ussishkin; 5 vols.; Tel Aviv University Sonia and Marco Nadler Institute of Archaeology Monograph Series Number 22; Tel Aviv: Emery and Claire Yass Publications in Archaeology of the Institute of Archaeology, Tel Aviv University, 2004) 5.2344. See also pp. 2259, 2261, 2291-94 for figures and further discussion.

226 Borowski, "Animals in the Religion of Syria-Palestine," in *A History of the Animal World in the Ancient Near East* (ed. Billie Jean Collins; HdO 1/64; Leiden/Boston/Köln: Brill, 2002), 412.

227 For discussion of the identifications of the undomesticated species in Deuteronomy 14:4-6, see Walter Houston, *Purity and Monotheism: Clean and Unclean Animals in Biblical*

system, which may have included religious treatment of such slaughter within family circles. The cases of bones of hunted animals presently known are sufficient to suggest a situation on the ground that the Bible says very little about. It is arguable from various lines of evidence that animals of the hunt served for sacrificial purposes both in the family orbit and at shrines, despite the lack of biblical evidence supporting this reconstruction.[228] This may point to families and local shrines as the religious home for conceptualization of the divine in terms of the hunt, as opposed to Israel's national temple and the royal and priestly elite that supported the production of biblical texts on the matter.

This reconstruction would correlate with the loss of hunting as a divine role in Israel's national literature but it would also support the reconstruction of a divine role for hunting at a local level, perhaps in a popular cult as Ackerman and Day envision. At the national level, ʿAshtart's role in warfare as well as the gods' warfare role (as we noted above for Baʿal and Rashap)[229] seems to have been conflated earlier with the role of the national god in Iron Age Israel. Perceptions about "foreignness" of some religious practices may have played a role in the new religious-political expression of later "reforms." In the emerging royal worldview, reductions of levels of religious praxis perhaps corresponded to reductions of levels in various divine powers, leaving Yahweh as virtually Judah's one and only. The goddess' place in the Israelite pantheon at the national level might have diminished under this development.

Law (JSOTSup 140; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 60-62

[228] Hesse and Wapnish, "An Archaeozoological Perspective," 457-91. See also Hesse and Wapnish, "Can Pig be used for Ethnic Diagnosis in the Ancient Near East?" in *The Archaeology of Israel: Constructing the Past, Interpreting the Present* (ed. Neil A. Silberman and David Small; JSOTSup 237; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 238-39 n. 1.

[229] Thus Resheph appears as a divine figure only as part of Yahweh's military retinue in Habakkuk 3:5, while the constellation of features associated in West Semitic literature with Baʿal are applied in biblical literature to Yahweh. Cf. also the biblical title *yhwh ṣb'wt* and Ugaritic *ršp ṣbỉ* (KTU 1.91:15). See Smith, *The Early History of God* (second edition), 80-101.



Top



Front

Fig. 1: Pottery shrine, 9th century BCE (from Amihai Mazar and Nava Panitz-Cohen, "A Few Artistic and Ritual Artifacts from the Iron Age at Tel Rehov," *Qadmoniot* 40/134 [2007], 101).

“Revisiting” Astarte in the Iconography of the Bronze Age Levant

Izak CORNELIUS

1. Introduction

This essay will deal with the iconography of Astarte in the Middle to the Late Bronze Age, the second millennium, Levant.[1] When we say “Astarte in Iconography” the question arises: What are we looking for? What is the “face” of the goddess whom we want to see? In Graeco-Roman,[2] Egyptian and even Mesopotamian iconography there is in most cases no doubt about which deity is depicted. There are even visual representations with captions, as for example on the Babylonian *kudurrus*.[3] Another example is the warlike Ishtar, identifiable in the iconographic record because there are some items with her name, which further enable us to interpret Akkadian, Old Babylonian and Neo-Assyrian seals with an armed figure stepping and standing on a lion as “Ishtar.”[4]

In the Levant, however, it is not so easy to *name* the deity that is visually depicted. As a matter of fact, from the many representations of deities from Ras Shamra-Ugarit, there is only one item with the name of the deity on it, the name of “Baal” on the stela of Mami.[5] The completion of two series of sources might change the whole picture of the iconographic landscape with regard to the gods and goddesses of the Ancient Near East and especially the Levant: *IDD* (*Iconography of Deities and Demons in the Ancient Near East*)[6] and *IPIAO* (*Die Ikonographie Palästinas/Israels und der Alte Orient*

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1 For the early history of Astarte, see Corinne Bonnet, *Astarté* (Roma: Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, 1996), 135ff. and Gebhard J. Selz, “Five Divine Ladies,” *NIN* 1 (2002), 32ff.

2 E.g. in *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae (LIMC).*

3 Jeremy A. Black and Anthony Green, *Gods, Demons and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia* (London: British Museum, 1992), 16.

4 Izak Cornelius, “Aspects of the Iconography of the Warrior Goddess Ištar and Ancient Near Eastern Prophecies,” in M. Nissinen and C. Carter eds., *Images and Prophecy in the Ancient Eastern Mediterranean* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009), 15-40 (cf. Figs. 1-3 with 4-8).

5 Cf. *inter alia* Izak Cornelius and Herbert Niehr, *Götter und Kulte in Ugarit* (Mainz: Ph. von Zabern, 2004), Abb. 72.

6 Eds. Jürg Eggler and Christoph Uehlinger, online at www.religionswissenschaft.uzh.ch/

= The Iconography of Palestine/Israel and the Ancient Near East. A History of Religion in Pictures).[7]

In the past, one of the problems with regard to the iconography of goddesses in the Levant in the Bronze Age has been the trend to usually identify any representation with only one of the three *A-goddesses* known from Ugarit: Athirat/Asherah, Anat and, of course, Athtart/Astarte.[8] No image with the name of Asherah is extant, also not in Egypt because there she was *not* worshipped. For Anat and Astarte there is Egyptian imagery with names.[9] The typical types can be identified beyond all doubt, because of the captions in hieroglyphs: the standing Anat and the very similar Astarte, the warrior-menacing Anat *and* nearly identical Astarte and the equestrian Astarte, but no riding Anat.[10] The similarity in iconography between Anat and Astarte creates a problem in that one cannot differentiate easily between Anat and Astarte. On the much discussed "Edwards stele" the names of *three* goddesses (Anat, Astarte and Qedeshet) occur, but only one figure – a naked woman on a lion – is shown.[11]

Another problem is that many representations of deities in the Bronze Age look very Egyptian, so how did the local Levantine representations differ from the Egyptian ones?[12] There is also a problem with certain sites (especially in Palestine) in that it is not known which deities were worshipped or included in the local pantheon. For the large North-Syrian centers such as Ebla, Emar, Alalakh and Ugarit texts make it clear that Astarte was wor-

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idd/. Cf. my entry on Astarte.

7 Silvia Schroer (and Othmar Keel for the first volume), *Die Ikonographie Palästinas/Israels und der Alte Orient: Eine Religionsgeschichte in Bildern, Band 1-3* (Fribourg: Academic Press, 2005, 2008, 2011), cf. www.ipiao.unibe.ch/en/index.html.

8 Steve Wiggins, "Shapsh, Lamp of the Gods," in *Ugarit: Religion and Culture. Proceedings of the International Colloquium on Ugarit, Religion and Culture, Edinburgh, July 1994: Essays Presented in Honour of Professor John C. L. Gibson* (Ugaritisch-biblische Literatur 12; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1996), 327.

9 Izak Cornelius, *The Many Faces of the Goddess. The Iconography of the Syro-Palestinian Goddesses Anat, Astarte, Qedeshet, and Asherah c. 1500-1000 BCE* (Fribourg: Academic Press, 2004/2008) and Keiko Tazawa, *Syro-Palestinian Deities in New Kingdom Egypt. The Hermeneutics of their Existence* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2009).

10 E.g. Cornelius, *Many Faces*, Pls. 3.8 (Anat), 3.6 (Astarte), 1.1 (menacing Anat), 4.4a (menacing and equestrian Astarte).

11 Cornelius, *Many Faces*, Pl. 5.16 and Tazawa, *Syro-Palestinian Deities*, 73: Doc. 2, 163; cf. Schroer, *Die Ikonographie Palästinas/Israels 3*, 306, #867 who argues that the third name was added secondary to a goddess with warrior-like cross-bands. Could it be that these bands and the names Anat and Astarte were added to an original Qedeshet stele? Or is this stela, which is now lost, a fake?

12 The "Baal stele" from Ugarit (Izak Cornelius, *The Iconography of the Canaanite Gods Reshef and Ba'al. Late Bronze and Iron Age I Periods (c. 1500–1000 BCE)* (Fribourg: University Press, 1994), 139 and Cornelius and Niehr, *Götter und Kulte*, Abb. 71) shows Syrian, Egyptian and Hittite influences. James B. Pritchard, *Palestinian Figurines in Relation to Certain Goddesses Known through Literature* (New Haven, CT: American Oriental Society, 1943), 85 observed that the Beth-El seal (discussed below) is of *Egyptian* origin.

shipped, but not, for example, for Megiddo.[13] One should also acknowledge the complex and non-congruent relation between texts and images, and also that textual and visual forms of evidence are not always comparable or complementary; "texts have no pictures and pictures rarely bear texts."[14] Texts can sometimes even limit the understanding of images.[15] A woman with an *atef*-crown, scepter and *ankh* on a stele from Beth Shean has been identified with Astarte, since the days of the excavator Rowe, because of 1 Samuel 31:10, where the armour of Saul is displayed in her temple. There is nothing specific to Astarte in the iconography on this stele and it could just as well be a depiction of Anat.[16]

2. Iconography of Astarte, Part 1: the Levant

This section will deal with the iconographic material from the Levant, trying to give a "face" to Astarte. Only anthropomorphic images will be discussed and not symbols which might be related to Astarte. The only representation of a Bronze Age goddess identified from an inscription on a stele is "Anat" on a badly preserved stele from Beth-Shean (12th century BCE) with an *atef* crown and holding an *ankh* and some kind of sceptre (Fig. 1).[17] It looks very Egyptian, which is not surprising, as Beth-Shean was a center of Egyptian influence.[18]

What about Astarte? There is a cylinder seal from Beth-El and on it a hieroglyphic inscription reading "Astarte" (Fig. 2).[19] Here one would think this is clearly an image of Astarte, but the matter is not that clear. There is a name, but the problem is: there are *two* figures flanking the inscription. Does the text refer to the woman on the right in a long dress with *atef* crown and holding a spear? This would break the symmetry of god:text:goddess. The menacing male (on the left dressed in a kilt) and the female (on the right in a longer skirt) both hold spears with blades pointing upwards and flank the

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13 Stephanie L. Budin, *The Origin of Aphrodite* (Bethesda: CDL, 2003), 208 and Herbert Niehr, *Religionen in Israels Umwelt* (Würzburg: Echter, 1998), 99. For Astarte at Emar and Ugarit, see the contribution of Mark S. Smith in this volume.

14 Joan G. Westenholz, "Goddesses of the Ancient Near East," in L. Goodison and C. Morris eds., *Ancient Goddesses. The Myths and the Evidence* (London: British Museum, 1998), 66.

15 Othmar Keel, "Die Deutung der Tierkampfszenen auf den vorderasiatischen Rollsiegeln des 3. Jahrtausends oder Texte als Störfaktoren," in *Das Recht der Bilder, gesehen zu werden* (Fribourg: University Press, 1992), Kapitel I.

16 Cornelius, *Many Faces*, 34, Pl. 3.2 and Tazawa, *Syro-Palestinian Deities*, 87: Doc. 12.

17 Cornelius, *Many Faces* Pl. 3.1; Schroer, *Die Ikonographie Palästinas/Israels 3*, #881 and Tazawa, *Syro-Palestinian Deities*, 73: Doc. 3.

18 Othmar Keel and Christoph Uehlinger, *Göttinnen, Götter und Gottessymbole* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1992), 92.

19 Cornelius, *Many Faces*, 28, Pl. 1.10 and Tazawa, *Syro-Palestinian Deities*, 88: Doc 15; cf. Schroer. *Die Ikonographie Palästinas/Israels 3*, #885.



Fig. 1: Schroer, *Die Ikonographie Palästinas/Israels 3*, #881.

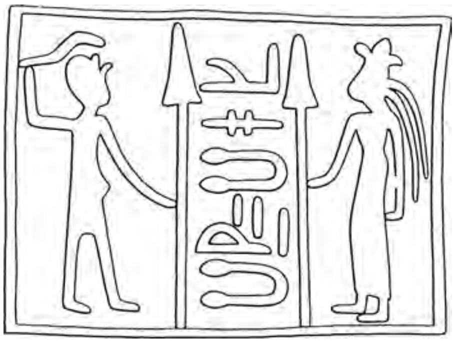


Fig. 2: Schroer, *Die Ikonographie Palästinas/Israels 3*, #885.

hieroglyphic text, so the text does not necessarily refer to the goddess depicted on the right. Perhaps there are *three* deities,[20] the third indicated only by her name Astarte.[21] The female figure on the right is often identified with the "violent goddess," Anat. So in spite of the text with her name, the face of our lady Astarte remains invisible![22]

Middle Bronze Age material in the form of seals is discussed by Silvia Schroer in her new catalogue. She is very careful and refers to the figures

[20] Tazawa, *Syro-Palestinian Deities*, 88 describes the male figure as a king because of the presumed blue crown and no horns, but because both figures hold spears, it is more likely that both are deities.

[21] As argued by H. Weippert, *Palästina in vorhellenistischer Zeit* (Handbuch der Archäologie Vorderasien 2,1) (München: Beck, 1988), 308.

[22] Edward Lipiński, *Resheph* (Leuven: Peeters, 2009), 155 even argues for "Astarte of the Battle" for the figure on the left, but admits that a female with a short skirt is a problem.



Fig. 3: Schroer, *Die Ikonographie Palästinas/ Israels 2,* #520.

as being of the "Anat-Astarte" type, especially with regard to the warlike figures. Some seals show a winged armed goddess (Fig. 3).[23] Because of the closeness to the iconography of the Akkadian Ishtar seals, where she is winged and armed, and as Astarte was the Syrian name of Ishtar, it might be argued that one can describe this local Syrian goddess as "Astarte." Anat is a violent goddess and winged in the texts from Ugarit,[24] but an *iconographic* tradition of an armed Anat with wings still needs to be established without doubt.

An Ebla seal impression (ca. 1725 BCE) shows a storm god with his consort behind him with an eight-pointed star, which is the symbol of the goddess Ishtar, and on her head is a bird (dove) (Fig. 4).[25] The dove might be a symbol of Ishtar/Astarte/Aphrodite. The dove is shown with Ishtar in a famous Mari painting, while on cylinder seals, the dove flies between the storm god and his consort, and the naked goddess is also shown with birds.[26]

[23] Schroer, *Die Ikonographie Palästinas/Israels 3,* ##518, 520-521 and Keel and Schroer, *Eva*, #63. Cf. Marie-Thérèse Barrelet, "Les déesses armées et ailées," *Syria* 32 (1955), Fig. 10 and Urs Winter, *Frau und Göttin* (OBO 53; Fribourg: Universitätsverlag, 1983), 222-227, Abb. 191-207.

[24] KTU 1.3 II and 1.10 II. Cf. Charles F. Fensham, "Winged Gods and Goddesses in the Ugaritic Tablets," *Oriens Antiquus* 5/2 (1966), 157-164; Marvin H. Pope, "The Scene on the Drinking Mug from Ugarit," in H. Goedicke ed., *Near Eastern Studies in Honor of William Foxwell Albright* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1971), 393-405 and Mark S. Smith, *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle* (VTSup 114; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 337.

[25] Beatrice Teissier, *Egyptian Iconography on Syro-Palestinian Cylinder Seals of the Middle Bronze Age* (OBO 11; Fribourg: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Göttingen, 1996), #184. On the star of Ishtar, cf. Cornelius, "Warrior Goddess Ištar," 21-22 and Ursula Seidl, *Die babylonischen Kudurru-Reliefs. Symbole mesopotamischer Gottheiten* (OBO 87; Fribourg: University Press, 1989), 99.

[26] Budin, *Aphrodite*, 29-30; Othmar Keel, *Gott weiblich. Eine verborgene Seite des biblischen Gottes* (Fribourg: Bibel+Orient Museum, 2008), 109-113; Keel and Schroer, *Eva*, 38-39, Abb. 57, ##67-69, #150; Schroer, *Die Ikonographie Palästinas/Israels 2,* 49, 204 with ##434, 437-442; Urs Winter, "Die Taube der fernen Götter in Ps 56,1 und die Göttin



Fig. 4: Teissier, *Egyptian Iconography*, #184.



Fig. 5: Schroer, *Die Ikonographie Palästinas/Israels 3*, #883.

Late Bronze Age amulets showing a woman with her arms on her sides and *atef*-crown can be either Astarte or Anat (Fig. 5).[27] Identifying the bronze figures is even more difficult.[28] The menacing warrior bronze figures might represent either of the two goddesses because both were linked with warfare.[29] The menacing deity in a Louvre chariot group might be linked to Astarte rather than Anat, because of the stronger link between horses and chariots and Astarte in iconography (Fig. 6).[30] When one looks at the Late Bronze Age riding goddess in the glyptic,[31] there is no doubt that we are dealing with Astarte, because of the strong Egyptian iconographic tradition of the equestrian Astarte (Fig. 7).[32] The naked woman on horseback ("Lady

mit der Taube in der vorderasiatischen Ikonographie," in O. Keel ed., *Vögel als Boten* (OBO 14; Fribourg: Universitätsverlag, 1977), 37ff.; cf. Ruth Mayer-Opificius, "Eine Ischtar-Darstellung aus Tell Dscharablus-Tachtani," in M. Lebeau ed., *About Subartu 2* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998), 285.

27 Cornelius, *Many Faces*, 39, Fig. 25 (contra Schroer, *Die Ikonographie Palästinas/Israels 3*,320, #883 (Anat)).

28 Cf. Gioacchino Falsone, "Anath or Astarte? A Phoenician Bronze Statuette of the Smiting Goddess," in C. Bonnet ed., *Religio Phoenicia* (*Studia Phoenicia 4*) (Namur: Société des Etudes Classiques, 1986), 53-67.

29 Cornelius, *Many Faces*, Pls. 1.4-1.5.

30 Cornelius, *Many Faces*, Pl. 1.6 (Louvre AO 22265); Schroer, *Die Ikonographie Palästinas/ Israels 3*, #878.

31 Cornelius, *Many Faces*, Pls. 4.8-4.26.

32 Cornelius, *Many Faces*, 42-44 with Pls. 4.1-4.4b and Tazawa, *Syro-Palestinian Deities*, 121. Eduard Lipiński, "Syro-Canaanite Goddesses in Egypt," *Chronique d'Égypte* 80, fasc. 159-160 (2005), 122-133 and *Resheph. A Syro-Canaanite Deity* (Leuven: Peeters, 2009), 172-

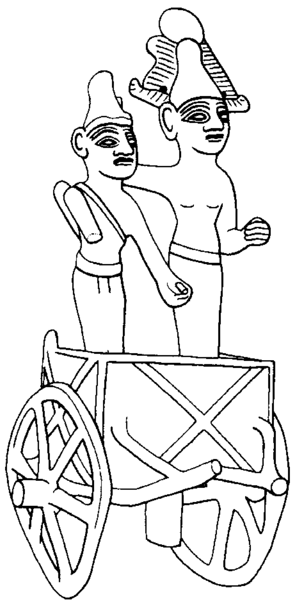


Fig. 6: Schroer, *Die Ikonographie Palästinas/Israels 3*, #878.



Fig. 7: Schroer, *Die Ikonographie Palästinas/Israels 3*, #876.

Godiva") on a gold foil from Lachish (Fig. 8) has been identified by many including Budin with Astarte, because of the armed horse and her link with horses.[33] But here she is not armed or aggressive as Astarte, the warrior in Egypt; the gesture is different and not menacing, she is holding lotus flowers, which were symbols of love and life.[34] Although this might be a *different* face of Astarte, it is closer to the Qedeshet type.[35] The same might be the case with the figure on horseback wearing a horned headdress on a mould from Tel Qarnayim, who is even flanked by two other (smaller) figures, which makes it even more definitely a Qedeshet-type figure (Fig. 9).[36] I restate my case: these are variants of Qedeshet and not of Astarte, unless traits and attributes of Qedeshet and Astarte were combined in these two specific cases. The Edwards stele does combine Astarte and Qedeshet.

174 is sceptical and opted for Anat, but his argument is not really based on iconography.

33 Budin, *Aphrodite*, 213, 239 with Fig. 8a; Christa Clamer, "The Pottery and Artefacts from the Level VI Temple in Area P," in D. Ussishkin, ed., *The Renewed Archaeological Excavations at Lachish (1973-1994)* (Tel Aviv: Yass Publications, 2004), vol. 3, 1314-1325 and Schroer, *Die Ikonographie Palästinas/Israels 3*, 310 with #869; contra Cornelius, Many Faces, 51, Pl. 5.22.

34 Even when Astarte is nude as on an Egyptian ostracon, she is still armed and aggressive, cf. Cornelius, *Many Faces*, Pl. 4.5.

35 Cornelius, *Many Faces*, Pls. 5.1-5.4.

36 Cornelius, *Many Faces*, Pl. 5.13 and Schroer, *Die Ikonographie Palästinas/Israels 3*, 310 with #870.

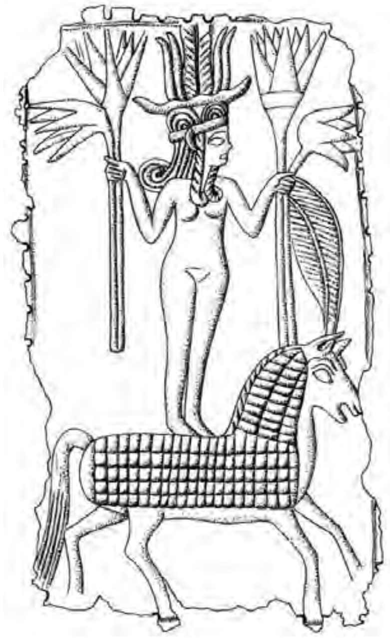


Fig. 8: Schroer, *Die Ikonographie Palästinas/Israels 3*, #869.



Fig. 9: Schroer, *Die Ikonographie Palästinas/Israels 3*, #870.

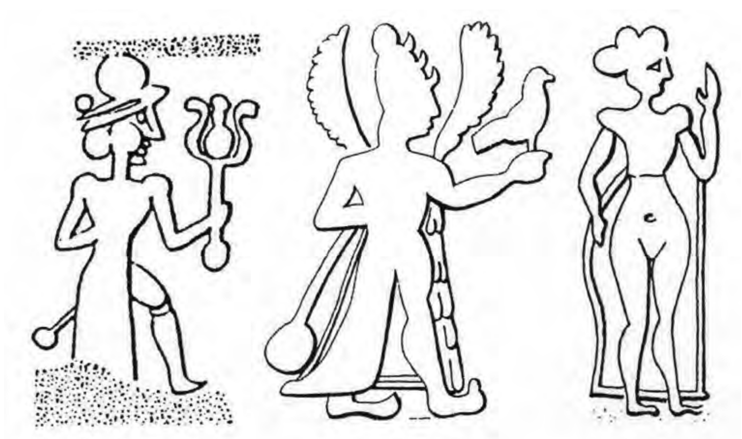


Fig. 10: Beyer, *Emar IV: Les sceaux*, Figs. 42-44.

In the texts from Emar, Astarte plays an important role.[37] The glyptic was published by Beyer, who identified Ishtar with a lion-headed mace, Ishtar-Shaushga and the nude goddess (Fig. 10).[38]

3. Iconography of Astarte, Part 2: Ugarit

In the texts from Ras Shamra-Ugarit, Astarte[39] is mentioned in the deity lists after the goddesses Athirat, Anat, Shapshu, Arsay and Ishchara,[40] but is not unimportant.[41] She is the West-Semitic equivalent of the goddess Ishtar. Astarte operates together with her sister in violence, the goddess Anat, and both are involved in the hunt.[42] Astarte alone, however, is linked to horses (KTU 1.86).[43] Astarte also has a leonine form, according to a song to Astarte published by Pardee.[44] It would be impossible to revisit all the possibilities from Ugarit, but there are a few classic examples which have played a major role when the iconography of the goddess Astarte has been discussed.[45]

A magnificent double ivory bedstead comes from the palace garden.[46] On the center panel a female with four wings and an elaborate headdress consisting of a Hathor hairdo, large horns and a sundisk is facing the front. She suckles two boys (princes or gods?). The link with Egypt is very strong, especially the hairdo (Fig. 11)**.** It is popularly identified with the goddess Anat,

[37] Cf. on the role of Astarte at Emar, Daniel E. Fleming, *The Installation of Baal's High Priest at Emar* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1992), 217-221 and "The Emar Festivals," in Mark W. Chavalas ed., *Emar: the History, Religion, and Culture of a Syrian Town in the Late Bronze Age* (Bethesda, MD: CDL, 1996), 90-91; and Mark S. Smith in this volume.

[38] Dominique Beyer, *Emar IV: Les sceaux* (OBO.SA 20; Fribourg: University Press, 2001), Figs. 42-44.

[39] On Astarte in Ugarit, see Budin, *Aphrodite*, 225-228; Mark S. Smith in this volume; Nicholas Wyatt, "Astarte," in K. van der Toorn et al. eds., *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 109-114.

[40] Dennis Pardee, *Ritual and Cult at Ugarit* (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002), 14.

[41] Theodore J. Lewis, "Athtartu's Incantations and the Use of Divine Names as Weapons," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 70/2 (2011), 207-227.

[42] KTU 1.92, 1.114.

[43] Pardee, *Ritual*, 145-146.

[44] Dennis Pardee in COS 1.93:294 line 6 and "Preliminary Presentation of a New Ugaritic Song to ʿAttartu [RIH 98/02]," in K. Lawson Younger Jr. ed., *Ugarit at Seventy-Five* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 27–39. Iron Age iconography shows Astarte with a lion head (Eric Gubel, "Phoenician Lioness Heads from Nimrud: Origin and Function," in E. Gubel ed., *Phoenicia and Its Neighbours* (*Studia Phoenicia 3*) (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 1985), 181–202).

[45] Cf. the materials discussed in Cornelius, *Many Faces*, Pls. 1.3, 1.9. 2.2, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6a-b, 2.7, 3.9. 3.11, 5.23, 5.20, 5.27, 5.28, 5.62 and also Cornelius and Niehr, *Götter und Kulte*, 48-54.

[46] Cornelius, *Many Faces*, 37-39, Pl. 3.11; Cornelius and Niehr, *Götter und Kulte in Ugarit*, Abb. 65, 101-102 (RS 16.065+28.031 = Damascus 3599); Jacqueline Gachet-Bizollon, *Les ivoires d'Ougarit et l'art des ivoiriers du Levant au Bronze Récent* (Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 2007), 137-139, 278, 376, 434, Pls. 26, 84 (#269:2/H) and Schroer, *Die Ikonographie Palästinas/Israels 3*, ##829, 957.

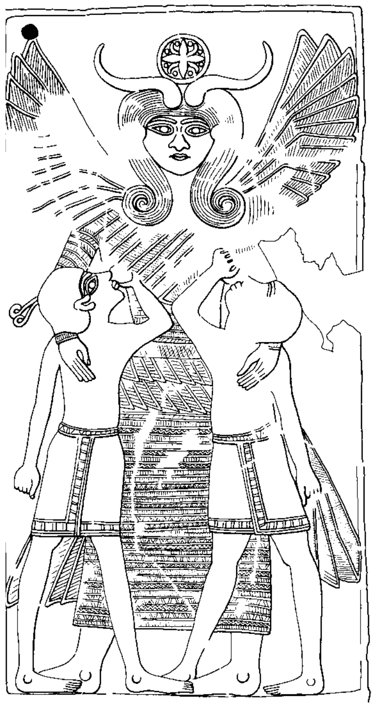


Fig. 11: Schroer, *Die Ikonographie Palästinas/Israels 3*, #829.

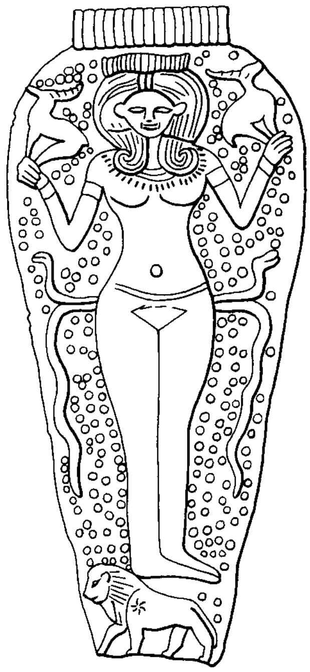


Fig. 12: Schroer, *Die Ikonographie Palästinas/Israels 3*, #859.

mostly because in the Ugaritic texts Anat is winged (as shown above), and especially because of KTU 1.15 II:27: Kirta's son draws the breast of *betulat* (maiden/adolescent, usually the name of Anat is added).[47] Line 26, however, reads that he sucks the milk of Athirat; the name of the goddess is read as "Astarte" by Greenstein.[48]

In KTU 1.23:24, the "gracious gods" are described as sucking the nipple(s) of Asherah's breast(s).[49] This means that all three of the "A"-goddesses might be involved. The texts are both problematic and in any case one should not read any text *into* an image. There is no one-on-one correlation between texts and images. All that can be said, is that we have a winged goddess suckling two boys (perhaps young princes). Whether this is Astarte, one cannot say for certain, but this seems less likely, especially because the winged goddess is not shown as armed.

47 As in S. A. Parker ed., *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry* (*Writings from the Ancient World 9*) (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1997), 25.

48 Edward I. Greenstein, in Parker, *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry*, 25 and "New Readings in the Kirta Epic", *Israel Oriental Studies* 18 (1998), 105-123.

49 On the text, see Mark S. Smith, *The Rituals and Myths of the Feast of the Goodly Gods of KTU/CAT 1.23* (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 64-66, 89ff., who does link the text with the scene on the ivory panel as "a portrayal of the divine nursing of the king."



Fig. 13: Cornelius, *Many Faces*, Pl. 1.9.

Golden pendants from the harbour of Minet el-Beida depict a naked woman with Hathor hairdo holding plants, and one rare example even has her standing on the back of a lion holding horned animals (as a mistress of the animals) with serpents at her hips (Fig. 12).[50] These items have been identified as Qedeshet pictures, because the position of the extended arms compares well with those stelae from Egypt with the name *qedeshet* on them.[51] Budin linked these images with Astarte.[52] The lion forms the pedestal for Ishtar; she is the equivalent of Astarte, who might even be in leonine form, but the "total iconography" is of greater importance than only one attribute. The gesture of the raised arms holding something is closer to that of Qedeshet, although in Egypt she also holds snakes, which are shown behind her hips on one of these items.

This type of figurine occurs only on golden pendants and never on terracottas,[53] which might be an indication that it was an elite image used by the upper class.[54]

A very difficult image, especially because it is headless (and here the goddess really is *faceless*), is the lady on a stele from near the Baal temple on the acropolis (Fig. 13).[55] She is not necessarily winged, but wears a winged dress

[50] Cornelius, *Many Faces*, Pls. 5.20, 5.23, 5.27. 5.28 and also 5.20a, 5.21, 5.29, 5.30 with discussion on pp. 50-51; Cornelius and Niehr, *Götter und Kulte*, Abb. 82-85. For the items with the lion and serpents: see Cornelius, *Many Faces*, Pl. 5.20 and Cornelius and Niehr, *Götter und Kulte*, Abb. 85 (RS 3.185 = Louvre AO 14714), cf. Schroer, *Die Ikonographie Palästinas/Israels 3*, #859.

[51] Cornelius, *Many Faces*, Pls. 5.1-5.18, 94-98 and Tazawa, *Syro-Palestinian Deities*, 96-100.

[52] Budin, *Aphrodite*, 202, 238-240, Fig. 8c.

[53] For the types in clay see Leila Badré, *Les figurines anthropomorphes en terre cuite à l'âge du bronze en Syrie* (Paris: Geuthner, 1980).

[54] Cf. Mark S. Smith in this volume on how a goddess fits into a society and a particular social level.

[55] Cornelius, *Many Faces*, Pl 1.9 and Cornelius and Niehr, *Götter und Kulte*, Abb. 89 (RS 2.038 = Aleppo 4625).

and holds a spear in one hand and something like an Egyptian *ankh* sign in another. The spear makes her a warrior goddess (mortal women did not carry spears in the Ancient Near East) and she has been identified with the martial violent goddess Anat.[56] She can be compared to the figure on the Beth-El seal already discussed, because of the spear that she is holding. Is this then Astarte? As argued earlier, this is not necessarily "Astarte" just because of the accompanying inscription on the Beth-El seal. She is a warrior goddess, but might be Anat or Astarte.

There is still no depiction from Ugarit which can unequivocally be identified or connected with the goddess Astarte.

4. Iconography of Astarte, Part 3: Terracotta Figurines

The terracotta figurines and especially the plaques should receive special attention because Albright coined the (somewhat unfortunate) label "Astarte figurines."[57] He linked these figurines with "the goddess of fertility."[58] There is still a great need for a new corpus of the material from Palestine/Israel in the form of a proper catalogue.[59]

Here only the Bronze Age material will be dealt with. The basic types in this period are:

1. Qedeshet-type with arms extended, holding plants/flowers;
2. Supporting the breasts;
3. Hands at the sides;
4. Hands on the lower body (Fig. 14).[60]

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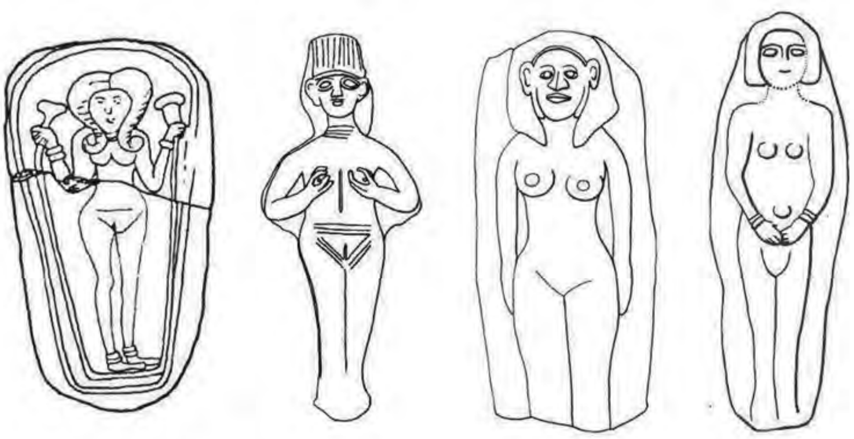
[56] E.g. Niehr, *Religionen*, 33 who opted for Anat.

[57] William F. Albright, "Astarte Plaques and Figurines from Tell Beit Mirsim," in F. Cumont ed., *Mélanges syriens offerts à Monsieur René Dussaud* (Paris: Geuthner, 1939), 107–120. Cf. also S. Nishiyama and S.Yoshizawa, "Who Worshipped the Clay Goddess?: the Late First Millennium BC Terracotta Figurines from Tell Mastuma, Northwest Syria," *Bulletin of the Ancient Orient Museum* XVIII (1997), 84 on the problem of the term "Astarte." I thank David T. Sugimoto who kindly sent me a copy of the latter article. Cf. also P. Roger S. Moorey, "Novelty and Tradition in Achaemenid Syria: The Case Study of the Clay 'Astarte Plaques'," *Iranica Antiqua* 37 (2002), 203-218.

[58] This outdated assumption should not be forgotten. Cf. the criticism of P. Roger S. Moorey, *Idols of the People. Miniature Images of Clay in the Ancient Near East* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 38-40.

[59] But cf. for the figurines with disks, David T. Sugimoto, *Female Figurines with a Disk from the Southern Levant and the Formation of Monotheism* (Tokyo: Keio University Press, 2008) and Sarit Paz, *Drums, Women and Goddesses* (Fribourg: Academic Press, 2007). See, for Palestine, the outdated and unpublished catalogue of Thomas A. Holland, *A Typological and Archaeological Study of Human and Animal Representations in the Plastic Art of Palestine during the Iron Age* (Diss. Oxford University, 1977). The material from Syria was published by Badré, *Les figurines anthropomorphes en terre cuite*. See the important study by P. Roger S. Moorey, *Ancient Near Eastern Terracottas with a Catalogue of the Collection in the Ashmolean Museum* (Oxford: Ashmolean Museum, 2001) and his book *Idols of the People*.

[60] Izak Cornelius, "A Preliminary Typology for the Female Plaque Figurines and their



a b c d

Fig. 14: a. Cornelius, "A Preliminary Typology," Figs. 1a; b. *ibid.* Fig. 2a; c. *ibid.* Fig. 3b; d. *ibid.* Fig. 3c.

Without going into more detail, the million dollar question remains: are these deities and are they to be called Astarte? Some are definitely goddesses, because they have horned headdresses or are standing on pedestals (as also one example from Ugarit); some are even on lion pedestals.[61] Others again have no divine attributes and are not necessarily goddesses. The idea that these plaques represent Astarte has been repeated by Budin in her book on Aphrodite, where she concluded: "In the Levant the nude female figurines represent the goddess Aštart."[62] But there is no reason to link the nakedness with Astarte as such.[63] In the meantime, another goddess has become popular in studies of these figurines, the lady Asherah, with her champion Dever.[64]

Miriam Tadmor has warned us to be more cautious when identifying such figurines as goddesses;[65] so has Pritchard, who way back in the 1940s refrained from linking these figurines with any known goddess.[66] The types

Value for the Religion of Ancient Palestine and Jordan," *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages* 30 (2004), 21–39.

[61] Cornelius, *Many Faces*, Fig. 50a and "Typology," Fig. A.

[62] Budin, *Aphrodite*, 237.

[63] Pritchard, *Palestinian Figurines*, 85 and Nannó Marinatos, *The Goddess and the Warrior: The Naked Goddess and Mistress of Animals in Early Greek Religion* (London: Routledge, 2000), 15.

[64] William G. Dever, *Did God Have a Wife? Archaeology and Folk Religion in Ancient Israel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005).

[65] In a brilliant essay on these figurines (which was delivered as a paper at an international symposium in Tokyo in 1979) by Miriam Tadmor: "Female Cult Figurines in Late Canaan and Early Israel: Archaeological Evidence," in T. Ishida ed., *Studies in the Period of David and Solomon and Other Essays*: *Papers Read at the International Symposium for Biblical Studies, Tokyo, 5-7 December,* 1979 (Tokyo: Yamakawa-Shuppansha, 1982), 139-173.

[66] Pritchard, *Palestinian Figurines*.

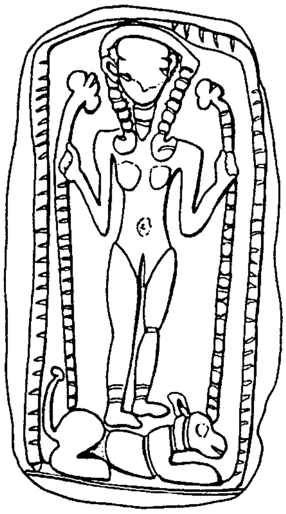


Fig. 15: Schroer, *Die Ikonographie Palästinas/Israels 3*, #863.

without any divine attributes (types 2-4; Figs. 14:b-d) can be eliminated, which leaves us only with the Qedeshet-type. The Qedeshet-type might have its Levantine origin in the above-mentioned golden pendant from Ugarit, where the lady is on a lion and holding horned animals. No terracotta shows her holding animals or snakes, as on the Egyptian stelae, but only plants.[67] A rare example from Tell Harasim has her standing on a lion (Fig. 15).[68] The lion was originally an attribute of Ishtar, but is shown with the Egyptian Qedeshet, who has nearly the same iconography as the figure on the terracottas, including the one on the lion. It is therefore argued that these images should be called "Qedeshet" images when these figurines are involved and that they are not related to the goddess known from the texts as "Astarte".[69]

5. Final remarks

Having reviewed the iconographic materials, this essay unfortunately has to end on a somewhat negative note. It is argued that it is not exactly clear what the face of Astarte in the second millennium looked like. There are

[67] The two examples from Beth-Shemesh and Zafit do not show snakes (contra Schroer, *Die Ikonographie Palästinas/Israels 3*, 304, #864), as shown by Izak Cornelius, "The Goddess Qedeshet in Syro-Palestinian Iconography," *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages* 25/2 (1999), 246-247 with Figs. 14a-b.

[68] Cornelius, *Many Faces*, Pl. 5.24; Schroer, *Die Ikonographie Palästinas/Israels 3*, #863.

[69] As in Cornelius, *Many Faces*.

some depictions of an armed warrior which might be called "Astarte" and the equestrian ladies are definitely Astarte; that one can be fairly sure of, because of the material with names from Egypt. The Ugaritic pendants and the terracotta figurines need not all be representations of Astarte.

Perhaps the ancient peoples never intended to show the face of Astarte, so she remains hidden. Our search for the face of Astarte, in which we want to link a name known from texts with images, might be altogether misguided. But the search continues and one day Astarte might show her face after all, a bit more clearly!

Astarte in New Kingdom Egypt: Reconsideration of Her Role and Function[1]

Keiko TAZAWA

1. Introduction

The goddess Astarte was introduced into Egypt with other Syro-Palestinian deities, Baal, Reshef, Hauron, Anat and Qedeshet mainly in the beginning of the New Kingdom.[2] Egyptian kings sent many military campaigns into the Syro-Palestinian region in this period, resulting in these six 'pagan deities' being brought into Egypt as well as battle booty such as prisoners, food, and metals, and also voluntary settlers in the form of craftsmen, merchants and so on.[3]

Stadelmann[4] indicates that Syro-Palestinian deities, of course including Astarte, have been imported to Egypt based on the king's belief that certain deities are explicitly appropriate, efficient and influential in specific regions – that is to say, since the present six deities were regarded as essential and pivotal players for Egypt to achieve victory and control over the Syro-Palestinian area, they were brought in.

Helck[5] also suggests a so-called 'package deal'[6] of newly-introduced products and the guarantees from Syria-Palestine as the reason why these six

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[1] I am most grateful to all the participants of the conference during 25-26 August 2011, Dr Dominic Williams and Dr Garry Shaw for their very valuable comments, advices and supports.

[2] Although there are some other foreign deities worshipped by the Egyptians, these six divinities stand out particularly. For details of the deities other than Baal, Reshef, Hauron, Anat, Astarte and Qedeshet, see Wolfgang Helck, *Die Beziehungen Ägyptens zu Vorderasien im 3. und 2. Jahrtausend v. Ch.* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1971), 458-460, 466-470. As for the period of introduction of Baal into Egypt, it can be said that the Asiatic rulers, Hyksos, brought the god in before the New Kingdom began.

[3] Keiko Tazawa, *Syro-Palestinian Deities in New Kingdom Egypt: The Hermeneutics of their Existence* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2009), 1, 3-4. This is a monograph based on the PhD thesis of the author (*Egyptian Religion under the Influence of Syro-Palestinian Deities in the New Kingdom*) submitted to the University of Liverpool in 2008. In the thesis and the book, the goddess 'Qedeshet' in the present paper is called the goddess 'Qadesh'. As for the previous studies on Astarte, see Tazawa, *ibid.*, 7-8.

[4] Rainer Stadelmann, *Syrisch-palästinensische Gottheiten in Ägypten* (Leiden: Brill, 1967), viii.

[5] Helck, *Die Beziehungen Ägyptens*, 1971, 472.

[6] Tazawa, *op. cit.*, 4.

Syro-Palestinian deities were imported into Egypt. It means that the Egyptians may have needed new divinities to match novel and unknown circumstances, such as chariots and horses, because no genuine Egyptian gods and goddesses could automatically have corresponded to the situation.[7]

Besides these explanations how and why the Syro-Palestinian deities were imported into and accepted in Egypt, the present author has proposed the manner in which these foreign divinities existed and functioned in New Kingdom Egypt:[8] the six Syro-Palestinian deities built the 'Tributary Relationship'[9] with the Egyptians as with the indigenous Egyptian gods and goddesses, and they were understood and installed in the Egyptian pantheon through the 'translative adaptation',[10] in the process of which the political, religious and social conditions were selectively reflected.

In this framework, the 'Hathor circle' in which the goddess Astarte functioned together with Anat and Qedeshet in New Kingdom Egypt[11] has been discussed and described (Fig. 1). It is suggested that the circle of Anat, Astarte and Qedeshet *en bloc* reflects the 'Hathor circle' comprised of two groups of Egyptian goddesses – the warrior group (Sekhmet and Bastet, even though Bastet should be regarded as much milder one) and the maternity group (Mut and Isis) with a branch of Nephtys through Isis in the Osirian myth – as a mirror image, and that this was an outcome of the effort by the Egyptians in order to understand and accept these pagan goddesses by "translating" them within the Egyptian mythological framework.

The aim of this paper is to reassess this mirror image of 'Hathor circle' in which Astarte played a provocative role within the Egyptian religious life after briefly-summarised characteristics of the emergence of Astarte in New Kingdom Egypt.

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7 The horse was not known by the Egyptians almost until the middle of the second millennium BCE when the Hyksos brought them into Egypt. This would be slightly too late for the Egyptians to recognise the horse as a sacred animal of a particular Egyptian deity. Therefore, the horse itself was not worshipped even though it was a highly significant and decisive instrument for the Egyptians in the battlefield.

8 Tazawa, *op. cit*.

9 Bruce Trigger, *Early Civilizations: Ancient Egypt in Context* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 1993), 76. It is a highly reciprocal relationship between the human beings and the divinities. The former provides the latter with surplus of energy as offerings in the form of foods, drinks, monuments and decorations, etc., and then the latter endows the former with divine protection in return.

10 Keiji Maegawa, *Australian Socio-Economic Influenced in Badu, Toress Strait – "Strategic Adaptation" of Middlemen and "Translative Adaptation" of the Community* – (PhD thesis: University of Tsukuba, 1994); Keiji Maegawa, "The Continuity of Cultures and Civilization: An Introduction to the Concept of Translative Adaptation," in *Japanese Views on Economic Development: Diverse Paths to the Market* (ed. K. Ohno and I. Ohno; London & New York: Routledge, 1998), 154-165. "Translative Adaptation" is that foreign ideas and systems brought in other societies are understood and received with modifications by translating them into the 'own words' of each society.

11 Tazawa, *op. cit.*, 163-165.

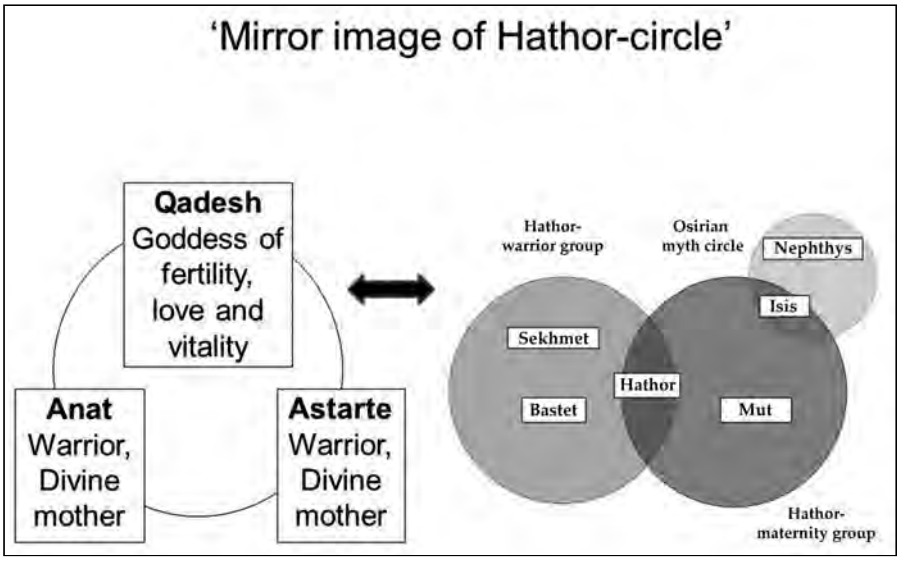


Fig. 1: Mirror image of Hathor circle (Tazawa, *Syro-Palestinian Deities*, Table 20).

*The left side of arrow displays the connection of three Syro-Palestinian goddesses (Anat, Astarte, Qadesh (= Qedeshet)) with their attributes verified from Egyptian contexts. The right side illustrates the 'Hathor circle' consisting of two characteristics of the goddess Hathor, Warrior and Mother. Sekhmet, Bastet, Mut and Isis are involved in each trait by their natures, and then Isis associates Nephtys with this relationship via the Osiris myth. As a whole, it would be possible to say that the link by three Syro-Palestinian goddesses in the left side would simply reflect the 'Hathor circle' containing a number of Egyptian goddesses in regard to their features.

2. Presence of Astarte in New Kingdom Egypt

The goddess Astarte with Egyptian context was attested diversely from the royal scene to that of the ordinary people in the New Kingdom. She pictorially appears on stelae, reliefs, cylinder seals, scarabs, amulets, ostraca, plaques and tools. Also her name is confirmed in the inscriptions on stelae, reliefs, statuettes, architectural structures, ostraca, some sections of chariots, vessels and papyrus (magical spells, literatures, applause for royal residence).[12] These evidences are proved, so far, from the Lower Nubia, such as Buhen and Abu Simbel in the south, to the Delta in the north including two cases from outside Egypt (Beth Shan and Bethel), and Memphis and Theban area are noticeable (Fig. 2). While Astarte worship in New Kingdom Egypt is verified throughout the period, it seems that the goddess was most popular from the second half of 18th Dynasty (probably after the reign of Amenhotep II) to the end of the 19th Dynasty.[13]

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12 Tazawa, *ibid.*, Table 10. For details of each material showing Astarte in iconographic representations and texts, see Tazawa, *ibid.*, 83-95.

13 Tazawa, *ibid.*, Table 11.



Fig. 2: Distribution of Evidence: Astarte (Tazawa, *ibid.*, Map. 5).

In iconographic representations, Astarte is distinctively depicted in an equestrian style.[14] She emerges in this guise with the royal contexts during only the 18th Dynasty, and the motif of Astarte riding on horseback seemingly slides into the religion of ordinary people in the 19th Dynasty. The equestrian style of Astarte is divided into two patterns: brandishing posture (Fig. 3) and possibly whipping posture (Fig. 4). In the former case, Astarte on horseback raises her arm holding a lance or spear, and very often wears an Egyptian Atef-crown,[15] even though sometimes she is dressed in the Egyptian White crown with streamers.[16] The stele from Tell el-Borg[17] in the eastern Delta shows that a spear and shield held by a figure on horseback is no longer the

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[14] It is possible that the association of Astarte with horses goes back to her Mesopotamian origins. The goddess Ishtar, who is linked with Astarte, is related to a horse in the *Epic of Gilgamesh* (René Labat, *Les religions du Proche-Orient asiatique: textes babyloniens, ougaritiques, hittites présentés et traduits* [Paris: Fayard & Denoël, 1970], 183). Also a link of Astarte and a horse is confirmed in *Ugaritic Dream Omens* (RS 18.041; Dennis Pardee, *Ugaritic Dream Omens* [Leiden – New York: Brill, 1997]).

[15] Tazawa, *op. cit.*, 2.1.5 Docs. 3, 5, 6, 8, 16-19, 27, 28.

[16] Tazawa, *ibid.*, 2.1.5 Doc. 7.

[17] Tazawa, *ibid.*, 2.1.5 Doc. 1: TBO 760; James Hoffmeier and Kenneth Kitchen, "Reshep and Astarte in North Sinai: A Recently Discovered Stela from Tell el-Borg", *Ägypten und Levante* XVII (2007), 127-136.



Fig. 3: Astarte: brandishing posture (Cornelius, *Many Faces*, Pl. 4.1).



Fig. 4: Astarte: whipping posture (Cornelius, *Many Faces*, Pl. 4.5).

exclusive attribute for Reshef, but also for Astarte. It seems that this brandishing posture on horseback should emphasise the nature of Astarte as a war goddess, compared with Anat who is, in Egypt, regarded as another martial goddess originated from Syria-Palestine.

In the latter case, whipping posture, mainly on ostraca,[18] Astarte is represented in the style of whipping or grasping the reins in one hand and placing the other on the rump of a horse. In this scene, no Atef-crown has been confirmed on the head so far, but the possible Egyptian wig is normally worn by the rider.

Now we should be careful to handle this motif – the equestrian style of Astarte – to avoid misidentification of the figure portrayed on the back of a horse. In some cases the figures on horseback are safely identified as Astarte by the accompanying texts, but in others no textual information are given about the images. It would be very unreliable to recognise all the figures riding horse as Astarte just because they are on the back of a horse.[19] It is true that human horse-riding scene is indeed very rare in ancient Egypt. Nevertheless, a relief from the tomb of Horemheb at Saqqara[20] shows a man riding

[18] Tazawa, *ibid.*, 2.1.5 Docs. 20-26.

[19] Stadelmann has already expressed his doubts about this issue (Stadelmann, *Syrisch-palästinensische Gottheiten*, 103-104). The author of the present paper should confess that re-examination is needed for Tazawa, *ibid.*, 2.1.5 Docs. 29 and 30 from this point of view.

[20] Museo Civico Archeologico di Bologna KS 1889.



Fig. 5: Astarte: standing posture (Cornelius, *Many Faces*, Pl. 3.6).

a horse, which implies that the figure on horseback is not necessarily Astarte. This issue will be discussed elsewhere.[21]

Apart from the equestrian style, Astarte sometimes appears standing with a peaceful attitude (Fig. 5).[22] Here, she wears an Atef-crown and long tight dress, and holds a *w3s*-sceptre and an *ʿnḫ*-symbol passively. Her posture is very calm even when she grasps a spear and/or a shield in her hand. When Astarte takes up this position, she always appears in the offering scene in which the king or the humble dedicate their worship to her.

It should be pointed out here that Astarte looks very similar to Anat in appearance in New Kingdom Egypt: postures of both standing and menacing, an Atef-crown (sometimes with cow horns), a ribbon at the back, long clingy dress, a *w3s*-sceptre and an *ʿnḫ*-symbol in their hands.

Most crucially to this paper, Astarte only once so far comes into view in the Qedeshet-style:[23] a naked female stands on the back of an animal or something else, and extends her arms to both her sides in a 'V'-shape holding (a) flower(s) and/or (a) snake(s). The so-called 'Winchester stele' or 'Edward stele' (Fig. 6) shows Astarte in this style with her name inscribed with Egyptian hieroglyphs for identification. It is noteworthy here that the names of Anat and Qedeshet are also carved along with that of Astarte:[24]

21 Cf. Edward Lipiński, "Syro-Canaanite Goddesses in Egypt," *Chronique d'Égypte* 80 (2005), 122-133.
22 Tazawa, *op. cit.*, 2.1.5 Docs. 9, 10, 12-15.
23 Tazawa, *ibid.*, 2.1.5 Doc. 11.
24 Tazawa, *ibid.*, 2.1.6 Doc. 14.



Fig. 6: Fragment of stele of Neferhotep (Tazawa, *Syro-Palestinian Deities*, Plate XII, 2.1.5 Doc.11).

Around the left arm: 'Made by the servant of the Place of Truth, Nefer-hotep, justified. Qadesh (= Qedeshet in the present paper), Astarte'
Under the right arm: 'Antit (= Anat)'

That is to say, one figure embodies three goddesses on this stele. This trinity of goddesses have not been attested yet in any Levantine text[25] and it therefore may have developed in Egypt independently.[26]

Some textual evidence indicates that Astarte in New Kingdom Egypt is called 'Lady of the Sky,'[27] 'Mistress of the Two Lands,'[28] 'Mistress of (all) the gods,'[29] and 'Mistress of Peru-nefer.'[30] Except for the last, Astarte shares first three epithets with Anat and Qedeshet,[31] which means that these three goddesses are associated with each other. Moreover, the first three epithets

25 Charles H. Bowman, *The Goddess ʿAnatu in the Ancient Near East* (Berkeley, CA: Graduate Theological Union, Ph.D. dissertation, 1978), 245.
26 Johanna H. Stuckey, "The Great Goddesses of the Levant," *Journal of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities* 30 (2003), 149.
27 Tazawa, *op. cit.*, 2.1.5 Docs. 9, 10, 14, 33, 35.
28 Tazawa, *ibid.*, 2.1.5 Docs. 9, 33, 41.
29 Tazawa, *ibid.*, 2.1.5 Docs. 10, 33.
30 Tazawa, *ibid.*, 2.1.5 Doc. 13. As for the precise location of Peru-nefer, see the history of studies on it at Tazawa, *ibid.*, 115, n. 446.
31 Tazawa, *ibid.*, 2.1.4 and 2.1.6.

were originally popular in Egypt. Although there are texts indicating that Astarte is from a foreign land, Kharu,[32] as a whole it can be said that Astarte's epithets in New Kingdom Egypt are Egyptian.

Instead of being a daughter of El in Ugarit, Astarte is designated as the daughter of Ptah[33] and Re[34] in Egypt, which again links Astarte with Anat and Qedeshet who are also associated with Ptah and Re.[35] Furthermore, these characteristics perhaps implies that Astarte and the other two Syro-Palestinian goddesses developed the association with five Egyptian goddesses Hathor, Sekhmet, Bastet, Mut and Isis all of who are also connected with Ptah and Re as explained below.

In addition, Astarte is accepted as a royal goddess who supports and protects the kings of Egypt in the military scenes, such as Amenhotep II,[36] Thutmose IV,[37] Sety I,[38] Sety II,[39] and Rameses III.[40] Furthermore, some children of Rameses II had theophoric names embedded with the name of Astarte: Meryastarte (Beloved of Astarte) and Astartehirwonmef (Astarte is on his right side).[41]

As with other Syro-Palestinian deities, Astarte is regarded as a curative goddess and invoked in an incantation for neutralisation of poisons in so-called magical spells.[42] It is highly plausible that the supposedly miraculous healing of Amenhotep III from severe health problems after he received the cult figurine of Ishtar (Mesopotamian Astarte) from the ruler of Mitanni influenced the Egyptians and consequently made them trust and count on Astarte for their own prosperity, health and stability.[43]

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32 Tazawa, *ibid.*, 2.1.5 Docs. 33, 34.

33 Tazawa, *ibid.*, 2.1.5 Doc. 43.

34 Tazawa, *ibid.*, 2.1.5 Doc. 45.

35 Tazawa, *ibid.*, 2.1.4 Docs. 13, 17 and 2.1.6 Docs. 5, 9.

36 Tazawa, *ibid.*, 2.1.5 Doc. 31: "the king's son (Amenhotep II) was charged to care for the horses of the king's stable and then he did that wherewith he had been charged. Reshef and Astarte rejoiced in him as he did all that his heart desired." The king's stable should be an infrastructure for military campaign.

37 Tazawa, *ibid.*, 2.1.5 Doc. 32: "The good god, Beloved of Montu, who is keen in all labour and valiant with his chariot team like Astarte, strong of heart among the multitude, a possessor of might, lord of action, the good god, Thutmose IV given life like Re."

38 Tazawa, *ibid.*, 2.1.5 Doc. 37: Sety I is "Beloved of Montu (and) Astarte" in the relief inscription of the campaign against Shasu-Bedouins.

39 Tazawa, *ibid.*, 2.1.5 Doc. 39: "As for the hands of your (= Sety II) chariot they are Anat and Astarte."

40 Tazawa, *ibid.*, 2.1.5 Doc. 40: "Montu and Seth are with him (Ramesses III) in every fray; Anat and Astarte are a shield for him,"

41 Tazawa, *ibid.*, 2.1.5 Docs. 47, 48.

42 Tazawa, *ibid.*, 2.1.5 Docs. 44, 46.

43 William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), EA 23. However, as Moran has already pointed out, this 'letter' does not say definitely that the king receives the statue for medical healing, and it is suggested that the figurine has been sent for attending the wedding ceremony. It is regrettable for us not to have had further evidences so far concerning the arrival of statues of the goddess Ishtar in Egypt.

It seems obvious that Astarte along with other Syro-Palestinian deities in New Kingdom Egypt is not connected directly with the Egyptian afterlife, namely funerary scenes and texts, which would be the most important subject for the Egyptians. Astarte, in fact, appears on votive stelae[44] expressing wishes for the stability and prosperity after the death of dedicators, however, she does not play a role which conducts the deceased to the netherworld onto the mythological rebirth or resurrection.

Consequently, from both the iconographic observation and that of textual appearance of Astarte, it is very clear that Astarte, Anat and Qedeshet are strongly linked or even share some attributes with each other in the Egyptian religious world during the New Kingdom. Moreover, it is intriguingly confirmed that Astarte sometimes appears together with Anat in some texts such as a tale, incantations and eulogies to the kings,[45] but that these two goddesses, whose appearance is analogous to each other, have never been depicted side by side in the iconographic representations in Egypt so far. This conceivably reflects some existence form of the three Syro-Palestinian goddesses in the Egyptian religious scenes, and it is unquestionably essential to examine how Astarte was venerated in New Kingdom Egypt from the viewpoint of the amalgamation of three goddesses, Anat, Astarte, and Qedeshet.

3. 'Hathor circle'

The mirror image of 'Hathor circle' is proposed on the basis of the association of Anat, Astarte and Qedeshet clarified above. The attributes of these three Syro-Palestinian goddesses overlap with those of the Egyptian genuine goddess Hathor. The epithet 'Lady of the Sky', shared by Anat, Astarte and Qedeshet, is one of archetypal attributes of Hathor.[46] Also, as with other deities, Hathor possesses various and opposing roles which show the polarity. She is well-known as the divine mother of the king and the goddess of love, sex, women, fertility, joy, music and happiness, but also, paradoxically, she is the bloodthirsty and warlike goddess in the guise of Sekhmet in the story *The Destruction of Mankind*. The 'Hathor circle' basically consists of these opposing attributes of Hathor: divine mother and goddess of fertility, love and vitality, versus savage warrior.

While Hathor is associated with Sekhmet and Bastet, the latter of which has much milder characteristics than the former, as a martial goddess composing the 'Hathor warrior group', she is also linked with Isis and Mut making up the 'Hathor maternity group'. It is plausible here to hypothesise that the Syro-Palestinian goddesses, Anat, Astarte and Qedeshet *en bloc* should

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[44] Tazawa, *op. cit.*, 2.1.5 Docs. 33, 34, 35.
[45] Tazawa, *ibid.*, 2.1.5 Docs. 39, 40, 44, 45, 46.
[46] Raymond O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969; hereafter *PT*), §546.

mirror this 'Hathor circle' comprised of two groups: 'Hathor warrior group' and 'Hathor maternity group'.

Anat and Astarte adopt both aspects of Hathor: warrior and divine mother. This also connects these two goddesses to Sekhmet and Bastet along with Isis and Mut. On the other hand, Qedeshet is always a symbol of fertility, prosperity and vitality which are other main attributes of goddess Hathor. Furthermore, the beneficial aspect of Qedeshet is supported and reinforced by the martial power of goddess Anat.[47] This indicates the interrelation of these two goddesses, Qedeshet and Anat, on the stele, mediating bipolar attributes.

Moreover, it is possible to extend the 'Hathor circle' by the Osirian myth.[48] It is supposed that there is a close affinity between Anat and Isis as the sister-wife based on the similarity of stories of the Baal myth[49] and the Osirian myth.

It is thus assumed that Anat, Astarte and Qedeshet *en bloc* reflects the 'Hathor circle' encompassing two groups with a branch (= Nephtys in the Osirian myth) in Egypt as the mirror image.

4. Motherhood Diagram

For reconsideration of the assumption that Anat, Astarte and Qedeshet mirrors the 'Hathor circle' comprised of two groups with a subdivision in Egypt, it is necessary here to start by double-checking the attributes of the goddesses concerned and the relationships between Syro-Palestinian and Egyptian goddesses involved in the mirror image of 'Hathor circle' individually.

In addition to the so-called 'Winchester stele' bearing all the names of three Syro-Palestinian goddesses for one figure with the Qedeshet-style, Anat, Astarte and Qedeshet undeniably share the same epithets 'Lady of the Sky' and 'Mistress of all the gods' (Fig. 7). Anat and Astarte, as a 'Daughter of Re'[50] (Fig. 8), are also connected to Qedeshet, 'Eye of Re', mediated by the sun god Re (Fig. 9). Likewise, Anat and Astarte, 'Daughter of Ptah', are further related to Qedeshet, 'Beloved of Ptah' (Fig. 10). Astarte and Qedeshet are 'Mistress of the Two Lands', while Anat is 'Mistress of Every Land'. Apart from the shared epithets, it is clear that the three goddesses are also healing goddesses to be appealed to in the incantations.[51]

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47 On the votive stele of Qaha (Tazawa, *op. cit.*, 2.1.4 Doc. 1 = 2.1.6 Doc. 6: BM EA191), Qedeshet is shown in the upper register with the request for stability and vitality in the afterlife. But the prayer devotes to Anat who takes up a brandishing posture in the lower register.

48 Tazawa, *ibid.*, 164-165.

49 Manfred Dietrich et al., *Die keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit, einschliesslich der Keilalphabetischen Texte ausserhalb Ugarits* (Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker, 1976), 1.5 vi – 1.6.

50 Hathor has a complicated relationship with Re as Eye of Re, Daughter of Re, Wife of Re, and Mother of Re.

51 Tazawa, *op. cit.*, 2.1.4 Docs. 21, 24-29; 2.1.5 Doc. 46; 2.1.6 Doc. 21.

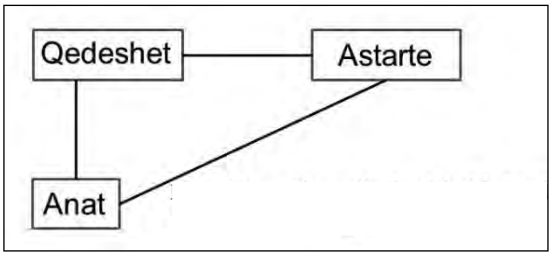


Fig. 7: Connection as ‘Lady of the Sky’ and ‘Mistress of all the gods’.

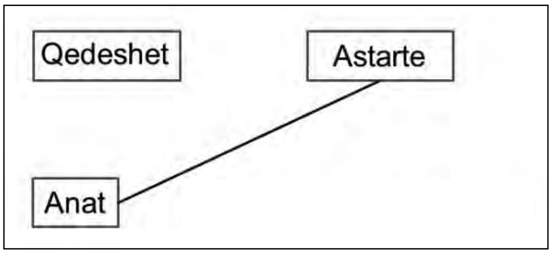


Fig. 8: Connection as ‘Daughter of Re’.

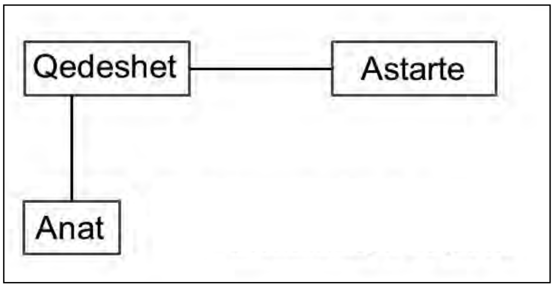


Fig. 9: Connection based on the relationship to the god Re.

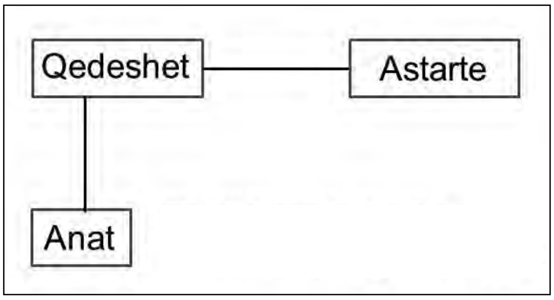


Fig. 10: Connection based on the relationship to the god Ptah.

As for the indigenous Egyptian goddesses concerned, Hathor (Daughter of Re/Eye of Re), Sekhmet (Daughter of Re/Eye of Re), Bastet (Eye of Re/Cat of Re) and Mut (Eye of Re)[52] are related with Isis (Eye of Re) by their

[52] Te Velde pointed out that the epithet ‘Eye of Re’ is given to Mut during the reign of Rameses II, which is late compared with other goddesses who bear this epithet. However,

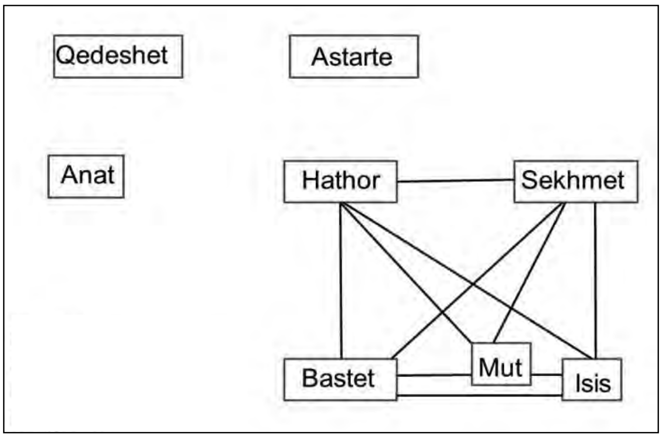


Fig. 11: Connection based on the relationship to the god Re.

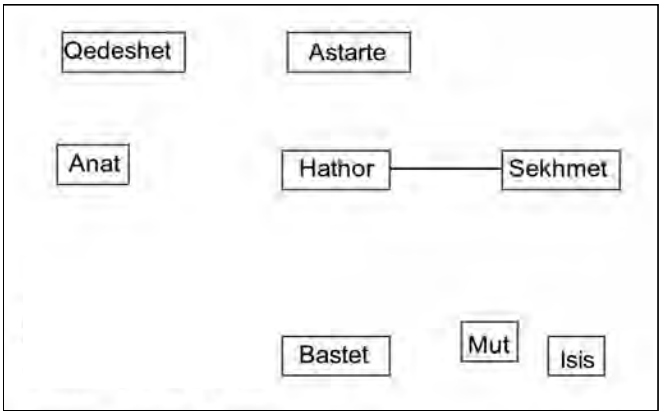


Fig. 12: Connection based on the relationship to the god Ptah.

epithets through the sun god Re (Fig. 11). All the five goddesses bear the title 'Eye of Re', even though the symbolism of this title is complicated and discrete.[53] Furthermore, Hathor and Sekhmet are also connected through Ptah as a daughter (Hathor) and a consort (Sekhmet) (Fig. 12).

In addition to the similarity of the pictorial appearance with cow horns and sun disk from the New Kingdom onwards,[54] Hathor (Mistress of West)

Mut is already connected to the lioness in the time of Amenhotep III. Cf. Herman te Velde, "Mut, the Eye of Re," in S. Schoske (ed.), *Akten des Vierten Internationalen Ägyptologen-Kongresses*, (Hamburg: Buske, 1988), 398, 400.

53 Ian Shaw and Paul Nicholson, *The British Museum Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (London: The British Museum Press, 2008), 110. The stories from which the title 'Eye of Re' is derived for each goddess are various.

54 Before absorbing some iconographical elements of Hathor, Isis has mainly been a mortuary goddess since she appeared in ancient Egypt in the 5th Dynasty. (Cf. Susan Tower Hollis, "Hathor and Isis in Byblos in the Second and First Millennia BCE," *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* 1:2 [2009], 1-8.)

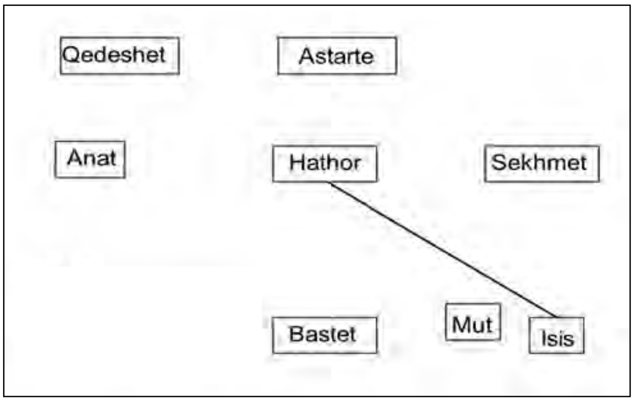


Fig. 13: Connection as a protector of the deceased.

and Isis (Isis of West) together offer protection to the deceased as a tree goddess[55] (Fig. 13).

Besides, the combinations of names of goddesses are confirmed from the New Kingdom: Sekhmet and Hathor,[56] Hathor and Mut,[57] Bastet and Sekhmet,[58] Sekhmet and Mut,[59] Mut and Bastet,[60] Mut, Sekhmet and Bastet,[61] and Isis and Mut,[62] etc.

Also the relation between Sekhmet and Mut is indisputable from a huge amount of Sekhmet statues, approximately more than 700,[63] from the temple of Mut in Karnak.[64]

55 Deborah Vischak, "Hathor," in D. Redford et al. (eds.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) II, 82. In addition, it is plausible that the epithets 'Mistress of West' (Hathor) and 'Isis of West' (Isis) indicates the relationship between Hathor and Isis as a funerary goddess.

56 '*Sḫmt-Ḥwt-ḥr*': Hathor Temple at Kom el-Hisn.

57 '*Ḥwt-ḥr-Mwt-m-Ỉwnt*': pChester Beatty IX vso B 10, 8. (Alan H. Gardiner, *Chester Beatty Gift*, 2 vols. [Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum, 3rd series; London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1935]).

58 '*Bꜣstt-Sḫmt*': Museum Barraco No. 11; Mohamed I. Moursi, *Die Hohepriester des Sonnengottes von der Frühzeit Ägyptens bis zum Ende des Neuen Reiches* (MÄS 26; Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1972), 41 and pl. 3.

59 '*Sḫmt-Mwt-m-Ỉšrw*': pChester Beatty IX vso B 10, 9 (Alan H. Gardiner, *Chester Beatty Gift*, 2 vols. [Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum, 3rd series; London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1935]).

60 '*Mwt-Bꜣstt*': Christian Leitz et al., *Lexikon der ägyptischen Götter und Götterbeziehungen* (Leuven: Peeters, 2002; hereafter Leitz 2002), III, 254 [1]-[3].

61 '*Mwt-Sḫmt-Bꜣstt*': Leitz 2002 III, 255 [1]-[3].

62 '*ꜣst-Mwt*': Berlin 17272; Günther Roeder, *Ägyptische Inschriften aus den Königlichen Museen zu Berlin*, II (Berlin: Hinrichs, 1924), 75.

63 Richard H. Wilkinson, *The Complete Temples of Ancient Egypt* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2000), 163.

64 http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/features/mut/; http://www.jhu.edu/egypttoday/

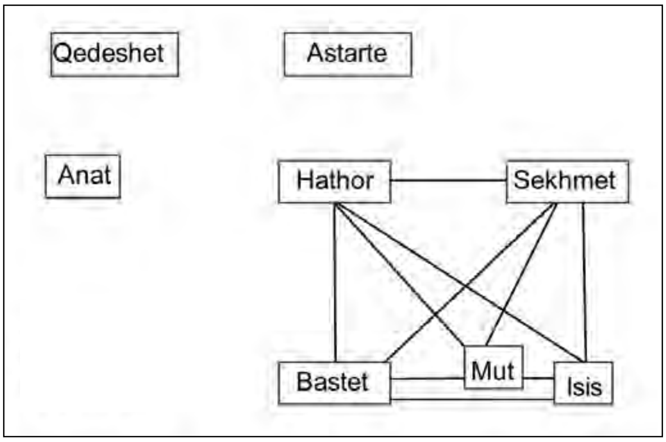


Fig. 14: Connection as a divine mother.

At last, it is noteworthy that all the five Egyptian goddesses, Hathor, Sekhmet, Bastet, Mut and Isis are the divine mother of the king[65] (Fig. 14). From this point, it may be reasonable to revise the name of the 'Hathor circle' – consisting of two groups: warrior and maternity – into the 'Motherhood diagram'. On one hand, although these five goddesses actually bear the title 'Eye of Re', it does not seem correct at the moment to call them 'Eye of Re diagram' instead of 'Hathor circle' because each goddess has separate story to obtain this title,[66] which results in that the symbolism of this title is unclear. On the other hand, it is credible to think that as a mother, one would be able to be aggressive like a martial goddess and also defensive as a curative and fertility goddess even using magical power only to protect the beloved one.[67] This is a polarity and both aspects are true for motherhood. Thus Hathor, Mut, Sekhmet, Bastet and Isis embody this 'motherhood' individually and these five goddesses complement each other by martial role and that of curing and breeding like Sekhmet as bellicose Hathor in the story *The Destruction of Mankind*. Here, it might be pointless to divide the 'Hathor circle' into two spheres because both 'warrior group' and 'maternity group' are two different aspects of the 'motherhood'.

It is conceivable to correlate the three Syro-Palestinian goddesses to the Egyptian goddesses. The Egyptian goddess Mut is connected with the three Syro-Palestinian goddesses by the epithets 'Lady of the Sky' and 'Mistress

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65 For instance, *PT* §262 and §2206 for Sekhmet; *PT* §1111 for Bastet. From the Ramesside hymn to Mut, both humankind and the gods came into being from Mut's tears, and Atum is vivified in the flesh of Mut (Harold H. Nelson, "Certain Reliefs at Karnak and Medinet Habu and the Ritual of Amenophis I – Concluded," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 8 [1949], 341-342; Harry M. Stewart, "A Crossword Hymn to Mut," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 57 [1971], 87-104, pl. XXV, l. 10). *PT* §2089 for Isis; as for Hathor, *PT* §466.

66 Cf. n. 53.

67 Tazawa, *op. cit.*, 163.

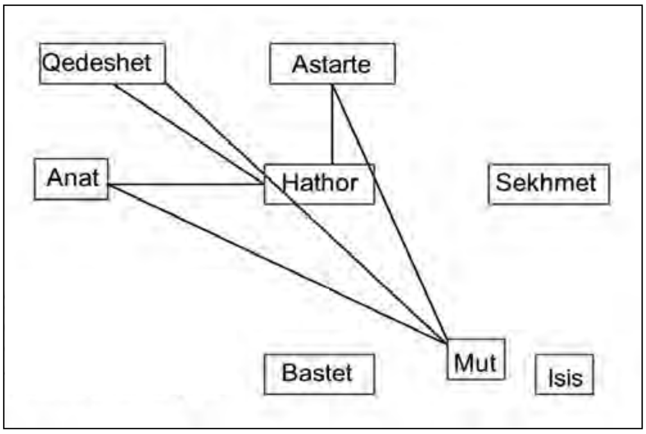


Fig. 15: Connection based on ‘Lady of the Sky’ and ‘Mistress of all the gods’.

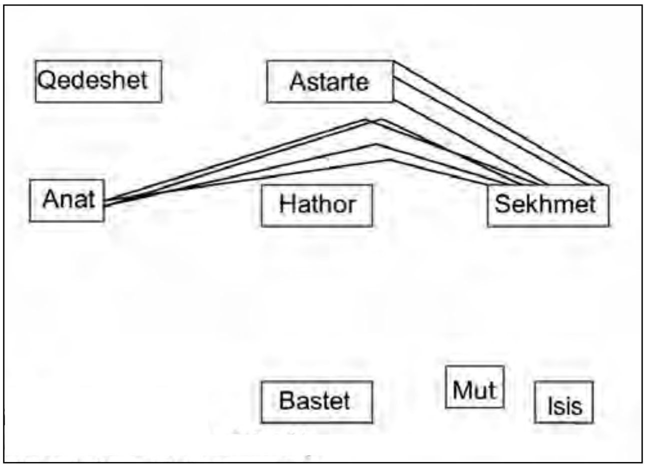


Fig. 16: Connection based on the relationship to the gods Re and Ptah (each line represents a different epithet).

of all the gods’. Only ‘Lady of the Sky’ is applied to Hathor, which means that the three Syro-Palestinian goddesses are allied to Hathor (Fig. 15). Qedeshet may more strongly be associated with ‘Lady of the Sky’ as ‘Mistress of the Stars’[68] and ‘Lady of the Stars of Heaven’[69]. Anat and Astarte (both are ‘Daughter of Re’ and ‘Daughter of Ptah’) can respectively be combined with Sekhmet (‘Daughter/Eye of Re’ and ‘Consort of Ptah’) on the basis of their relationships with Re and Ptah (Fig. 16)**.** Anat and Astarte are also connected with Bastet because of their associations with Re as ‘Daughter of Re’ and ‘Eye of Re’ (Fig. 17). Qedeshet (‘Beloved of Ptah’ and ‘Eye of Re’) and Sekhmet (‘Consort of Ptah’ and ‘Daughter/Eye of Re’) are additionally linked by their affinity with Ptah and Re (Fig. 18). Qedeshet also has a close

[68] Tazawa, *ibid.*, 2.1.6 Doc. 8.
[69] Tazawa, *ibid.*, 2.1.6 Doc. 19.

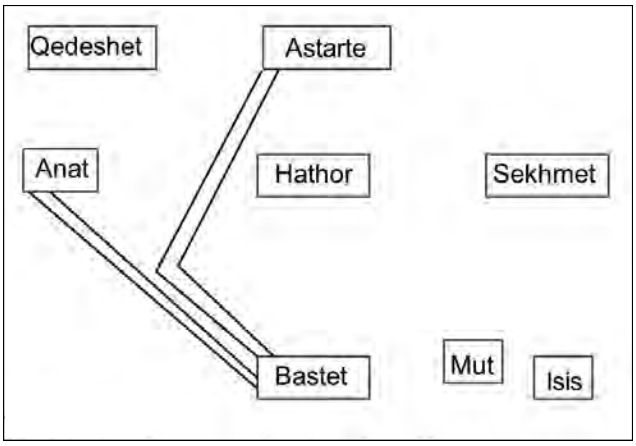


Fig. 17: Connection based on the relationship to the god of Re (each line represents a different epithet).

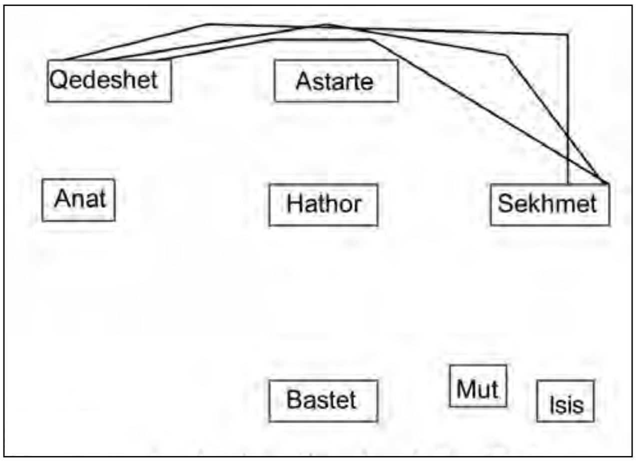


Fig. 18: Connection based on the relationship to the gods Re and Ptah (each line represents a different epithet).

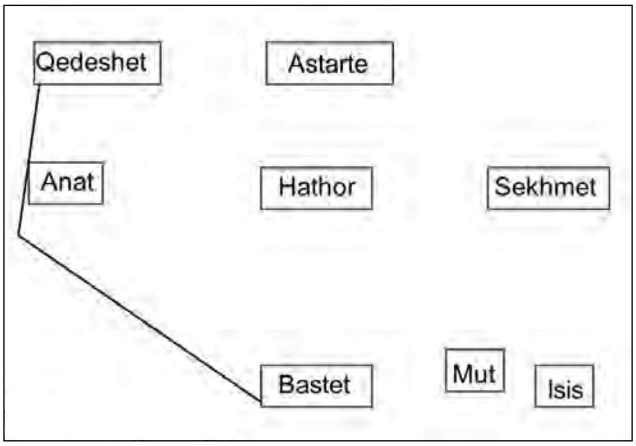


Fig. 19: Connection as 'Eye of Re'.

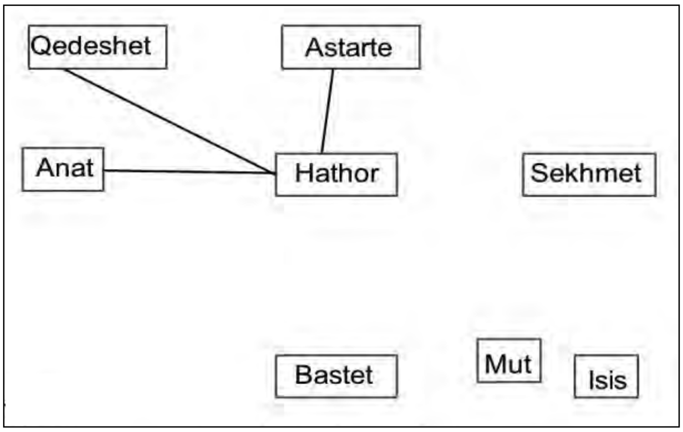


Fig. 20: Connection as ‘Daughter of Re’ and ‘Eye of Re’.

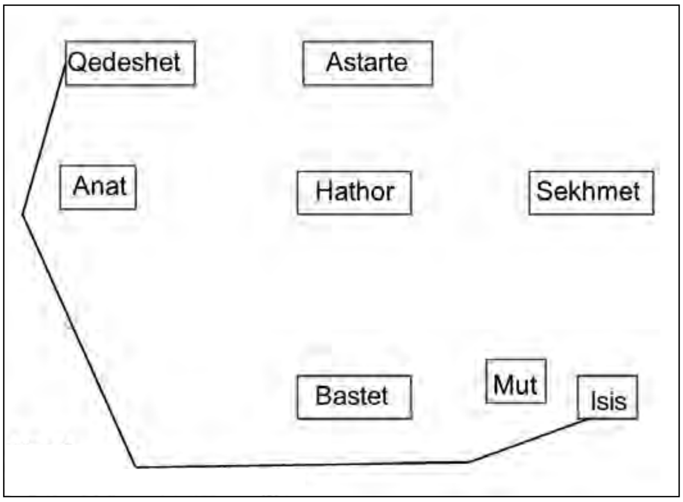


Fig. 21: Connection as ‘Great of Magic’.

relationship with Bastet as ‘Eye of Re’ (Fig. 19). The sun god Re also associates Hathor with the three Syro-Palestinian goddesses as ‘Daughter of Re’ and ‘Eye of Re’ (Fig. 20). Only Qedeshet seems to be connected with Isis as ‘Great of Magic’ so far (Fig. 21). It indicates that Qedeshet and Isis belong to the domain of healing together as saviour goddesses who use magical power to cure the sufferers. Fig. 22 shows the diagram of the relationship which Egyptian five goddesses and three Syro-Palestinian goddesses have formed based on the motherhood (motherhood diagram).

Additionally, Astarte and Anat are displayed as warrior goddesses from the iconographic representations, and also, as mentioned above, Anat and Astarte are also invoked in the incantations[70] as healing goddesses, which

[70] Cf. n. 52.

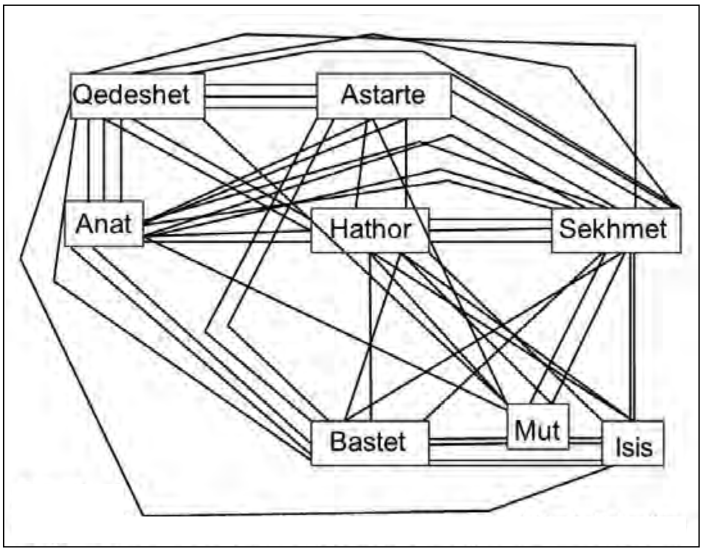


Fig. 22: Diagram of relationships: the goddesses of Egypt and Syria-Palestine.

further link them with Sekhmet, because the polarity is proved in these three goddesses as both martial and curative.

Consequently, it is shown clearly that the titles of each goddess concerned and the situation here combine these eight goddesses in various ways beyond the border of political, cultural and religious background between Egypt and Syria-Palestine.

Under the circumstances, it would be highly likely to presume that Anat, Astarte and Qedeshet would have been incorporated into the 'Motherhood diagram' defined above consisting of the five Egyptian goddesses: Hathor, Sekhmet, Bastet, Mut and Isis. It is clear that Anat, Astarte and Qedeshet comprise this 'Motherhood diagram': Anat is undeniably the divine mother from the texts of Rameses II, and her maternity is also confirmed in the incantation in which the magician says that "he has fed on the milk of Anat, the great cow of Seth,"[71] then Astarte shows the ferocity to conduct the healing and nursing and protect the beloved one, and Qedeshet appears in the nude as the goddess of fertility which is naturally connected with eroticism, sexuality and finally becoming a mother.

Hathor and Mut symbolise various existence forms of the motherhood: 'become' a mother and 'being' a mother. Compared with Mut, Hathor is "much more the daughter or young female who sets the world in motion with erotic and sexual excitation."[72] In ancient Egypt, as probably with other

[71] Tazawa, *ibid.*, 2.1.4 Doc. 26.

[72] Hermann te Velde, "Mut and Other Ancient Egyptian Goddesses," in P. Jacqueline and L. Bell (eds.), *Ancient Egypt, the Aegean, and the Near East: Studies in Honour of Martha Rhoads Bell* (San Antonio: Van Siclen, 1998), 461.

ancient societies, eroticism and sexuality are combined with dance, music and drunkenness resulting in fertility, and therefore they should be absolutely different from the 'pornography' in the modern sense. Thus, Hathor is a goddess of joyful conception as a "biological motherhood."[73] On the other hand, Mut is rather a social and institutional mother like Isis who is well known as a caring and nursing mother of Horus.[74] As "the queen-mother and founder of dynasties,"[75] Mut "gives birth to the heir"[76] and more royal protection to her son, namely the king.

It may well be that this relationship between Hathor and Mut is mirrored by that of Qedeshet and Anat, although Qedeshet does not have any direct title as a mother. The nudity of Qedeshet definitely indicates that she is a goddess of eroticism and sexuality leading to fertility. Also, Anat is the divine mother of the king even though this is prominent in the case of Rameses II. As with that Hathor and Mut are different but that they can complement each other,[77] Qedeshet and Anat seemingly compensate so as to 'balance' the 'Motherhood.'[78]

It thus can be said that the three Syro-Palestinian goddesses are involved in this Egyptian 'Motherhood diagram' and function together with these five Egyptian goddesses complementarily with rather meticulous attention.

5. Conclusion

Finally, based on the discussion above, it is deduced that Anat, Astarte and Qedeshet have existed as individual goddesses in New Kingdom Egypt, [79] and that at the same time each of them also shows distinctive aspect of 'Motherhood' respectively. The three Syro-Palestinian goddesses seemingly have kept the polarity of the motherhood, such as belligerent versus healing, which has been embodied by the Egyptian five goddesses in New Kingdom Egypt. It would be true that this opposite appearance of motherhood should actually be unitary phenomena not to be divided into two groups. It looks as if Astarte mainly shows the furious and aggressive aspect of the motherhood to protect the children or beloved one. However, she appears in incantations

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73 Philippe Derchain, review of *Untersuchungen zur Göttin Isis vom Alten Reich bis zum Ende des Neuen Reiches*, by M. Münster, *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 27 (1970), 21-23.

74 Velde, "Mut," 461.

75 Saphinaz A. Naguib, *Le clergé feminin d'Amon thébain à la 21e dynastie* (Leuven: Peeters, 1990), 244.

76 *Ibid.*

77 Velde, "Mut," 461.

78 Cf. n. 47.

79 The goddesses 'Qedeshet' seems to have not been identified as a proper deity in her birth place, Syria-Palestine, but as an epithet or abstractive substance of 'holiness' for the goddess Athiratu. On the other hand, in Egypt she is regarded as an individual goddess. Cf. Tazawa, *Syro-Palestinian Deities*, 135.

as a curative goddess to guard the people from venom or other evil matters. She indicates these two natures of mother by herself.

As it may have already been noticed, the goddess Nephtys has never appeared in this diagram so far. It is a major difference between the 'Hathor circle' and the 'Motherhood diagram'. Nephtys has taken part in the former through the goddess Isis in the framework of the Osiris myth. However, this connection between Isis and Nephtys mainly depends on their relationship as a mortuary goddess,[80] not the motherhood, which does not seem appropriate for the three Syro-Palestinian deities as mentioned above. Therefore, Nephtys is not counted among the members of newly-proposed 'Motherhood diagram'.

Although no pictorial and textual records show the direct combination of Astarte and any Egyptian goddess(es) by placing their iconographies or names side by side in New Kingdom Egypt,[81] if we dare try to link Astarte to the particular Egyptian goddess, it would be possible to suggest, agreeing with Stadelmann, that Astarte may well be corresponded to Sekhmet[82] based on the fact that her connection with Memphis (the central cult place of Sekhmet[83]) and the god Ptah[84] seems stronger and much-promoted than that of Anat and Qedeshet who might have been associated with Memphis. Moreover, as a martial goddess conforming to Sekhmet, Astarte was exclusively linked with the horse which was crucial and essential device to the Egyptian army.

Meanwhile, it should be noted that Sekhmet is identified as the royal divine mother of Rameses II together with the goddess Wadjet in Tanis, which

[80] Nephtys is also linked with Hathor as a funerary goddess.

[81] The combination 'Sekhmet-Astarte' is confirmed in the Roman Period (Bertha Porter and Rosalind Moss, *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs, and Paintings* V [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1937], 168 (3)-(4)).

[82] Stadelmann has already suggested this connection because Astarte is called 'daughter of Ptah' (Stadelmann, *Syrisch-palästinensische Gottheiten*, 101ff). However, when one claims her association with Sekhmet, the connection between Astarte and Peru-nefer should additionally be taken into account. Although Hoenes proposes to establish the Astarte-Sekhmet relation due to the epithets of Astarte on the stele dedicated by Ram (Sigrid-Eike Hoenes, *Untersuchungen zu Wesen und Kult der Göttin Sachmet* [Bonn: Habelt, 1976], 180-181; Tazawa, *ibid.*, 2.1.5 Doc. 33), these epithets, 'Lady of the Sky,' 'Mistress of the Two Lands' and 'Mistress of the Gods,' are also applied to other goddesses as well. It is thus slightly unpersuasive.

[83] Astarte is the 'Mistress of Per-nefer,' and has a temple dedicated to her in Memphis. See Tazawa, *ibid.*, 2.1.5 Docs. 36 (Bertha Porter and Rosalind Moss, *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs, and Paintings* III^2 pt. 2 [Oxford: Clarendon Press (for) the Griffith Institute, 1974], 717; Karl Lepsius, *Denkmäler aus Ägypten und Äthiopien: Text herausgegeben von E. Naville* [Berlin: Nicolai, 1849–1856], I 16) and 41 (Bertha Porter and Rosalind Moss, *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs, and Paintings* III^2 [Oxford: Clarendon Press (for) the Griffith Institute, 1974], pt. 2, 873).

[84] Beside Stadelmann's indication (cf. n. 82), Astarte is described as a resident in the temple of Ptah (Tazawa, *ibid.*, 2.1.5 Doc. 34).

means that Anat favoured by the king could be equated to Sekhmet in this area as the king's divine mother.[85]

After all, nevertheless, the correlation may indicate that it would not be reasonable to demonstrate one-on-one relationship between the three Syro-Palestinian goddesses and the five Egyptian female deities.

Here, the revised 'Hathor circle' namely 'Motherhood diagram' is proposed, however, at the same time, it is apparently needed to improve this model with further comprehensive discussion based on both archaeological and textual testimonies including more indigenous Egyptian goddesses possibly related to the three Syro-Palestinian goddesses via Hathor, Sekhmet, Bastet, Mut and Isis. For instance, Werethekau, Wadjet, Neith, Nekhbet, Nut and Selket in New Kingdom Egypt.[86]

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85 Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1968–1983), II, 446-447 and Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions: Translated and Annotated* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), II, 273-275.

86 Cf. for Sekhmet-Bastet-Werethekau, Erik Hornung, *Zwei ramessidische Königsgräber: Ramses IV. und Ramses VII.* (Mainz am Rhein: Ph. von Zabern, 1990), 62 and pl. 115. For Mut-Bastet-Werethekau, cf. Harold H. Nelson and Uvo Hoelscher, *The Epigraphic Survey, Medinet Habu* (Chicago: Oriental Institute Press, 1930–1970), V, 261 A; and for Mut-Wadjet-Sekhmet-Bastet, cf. Louis A. Christophe, *Temple d'Amon à Karnak. Les divinités des colonnes de la grande salle hypostyle et leurs épithètes* (Cairo: Imprimerie de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1955), 70.

Astarte in the Bible and her Relation to Asherah

Stéphanie ANTHONIOZ

1. Introduction

The name of the goddess Ishtar is a Semitic name. However, its etymology has not yet been clearly established. It could be based on the root meaning "being rich,"[1] or it could refer to the "morning star".[2] Anciently pronounced Eshtar, the name derives from the common Semitic *ʿṯtr,* which appears as the name of a masculine divinity[3] in South-Arabian sources and in the city of Ugarit.[4] The feminine form is also attested in South-Arabian sources (*ʿṯtrm*)[5] and is much more common than the masculine in West-Semitic sources (*ʿṯtrt*)[6] at Ugarit,[7] in Phoenicia,[8] and in the Bible (עשתרת).

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1 H.-P. Müller says most scholars believe that we are dealing with the Semitic root "being rich," but that surprisingly the divinity exists in languages where the verbal root is not attested; H.-P. Müller, "עשתרת, *ʿaštôret,*" *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2001), 11:423-434 (hereafter Müller, 2001).

2 V. Blažek "The Semitic Divine Name *ʿaṯtar(-at-) and its Possible Afroasiatic Cognates," in P. Zemánek (ed.), *Studies in Near Eastern Languages and Literatures: Memorial Volume for Karel Petráček* (Prague: Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic Oriental Institute, 1996), 133-141.

3 That the goddess Ishtar should bear a masculine name is best explained by the fact that the divinity was originally androgynous. Moreover, the masculine form would be related to Venus as the morning star, whereas the feminine form would be related to the evening star; A. Yahuda, "The Meaning of the Name Esther," *JRAS* 8 (1946), 174-78, reedited in C. A. Moore, *Studies in the Book of Esther* (New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1982), 268-272; G. Buccellati and W. Heimpel, *The Descent of Inanna as a Ritual Journey to Kutha & A Catalog of Near Eastern Venus Deities* (Malibu: Undena Publications, 1982), 9-22; A. Archi, "Divinités sémitiques et divinités de substrat: Le cas d'Išhara et d'Ištar à Ébla," *Mari: Annales de recherches interdisciplinaires* 7 (1993), 71-78.

4 Mark S. Smith, "The God Athtar in the Ancient Near East and His Place in KTU 1.6 I," in *Solving Riddles and Untying Knots* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1995), 627-640.

5 F. Bron, "Divinités communes à la Syrie-Palestine et à l'Arabie du Sud préislamique," *Aula Orientalis* 17-18 (1999-2000), 437.

6 Except in Ebla where the name is noted *ᵈAš-tár*. But as P. Mander noted, the goddess found less room in Ebla "en raison de la concurrence de la déesse du substrat Ishhara"; P. Mander, "Les dieux et le culte à Ébla," in G. del Olmo Lete (ed.), *Mythologie et religion des Sémites occidentaux* (Louvain: Peeters, 2008), 58.

7 As equivalent both to the Mesopotamian Ishtar and to the Ashtarat of Mari; P. Bordreuil "Ashtart de Mari et les dieux d'Ougarit," *Mari: Annales de recherches interdisciplinaires*

The plural of the feminine form has been recognized as a generic for "goddesses" in Neo-Assyrian sources (*ištarātu*). And the *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* considers the common name *ištar* to mean "goddess." But it is not easy to decide whether the root means "goddess," or whether the all-encompassing Mesopotamian goddess Ishtar has given her name to the common noun by way of assimilation. Is not Ishtar at the same time any goddess and all goddesses, the divine feminine par excellence? This last position has been current,[9] but J.-M. Durand has argued that *ištar* should be compared to Baal, which means "master" and designates any storm divinity in West-Semitic sources.[10] And so the city of Mari on the Euphrates has attestations to several different Ishtars named according to their locality, just as Neo-Assyrian sources have located her in Nineveh, Assur or Arbela.[11] This last position is very consistent with the recent analysis on the South-Arabian goddess *ʿṯtrm* as documented by Christian Robin.[12]

Ishtar is mentioned in the Bible using various terms, such as "Queen of Heaven,[13] but since she is most often present in the form "Ashtoret" (עשתרת), also attested in the plural "Ashtarot," it is worth considering the question of its use as a generic. This analysis will lead us to compare the use of Astarte-Ashtoret with that of "Asherah," which is also attested in the plural. The contexts of their occurrences will enable us to consider, not just the question of their use as generic names, but also the question of their representation and their relation to one another in biblical sources.[14]

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4 (1998), 545-547.

8 See the sarcophagus of Tabnit in Sidon dating back to the 6th century (KAI 13), where the king is priest of *ʿṯtrt*, possibly patroness of the city; the sarcophagus of Eshmunazar also in Sidon (KAI 14), where his mother is priestess of *ʿṯtrt*; and the votive throne in Tyre from the 2th century (KAI 17). See also Bordreuil, "Ashtart de Mari." The Phoenician goddess is well attested in Egypt. Finally I would refer to the Ammonite Shagar-and-ʿAshtar at Deir ʿAlla; É. Puech, "Bala'am and Deir ʿAlla," *The Prestige of the Pagan Prophet Balaam in Judaism, Early Christianity and Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 39.

9 Müller, 2001, 11:425.

10 J-M. Durand, "La religion amorrite en Syrie à l'époque des archives de Mari," in G. del Olmo Lete (ed.), *Mythologie et religion des Sémites occidentaux* (Louvain: Peeters, 2008), 163-716, 198-201.

11 W. Lambert "Ištar of Nineveh," *Iraq* 66 (2004), 35-39; B. Porter, "Ishtar of Nineveh and Her Collaborator, Ishtar of Arbela, in the Reign of Assurbanipal," *Iraq* 66 (2004), 41-44.

12 Personal communication.

13 Mark S. Smith, *The Early History of God: Yahweh and the Other Deities in Ancient Israel* (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 2002), 182 (hereafter Smith, *Early History*); S. Olyan, "Some Observations Concerning the Identity of the Queen of Heaven," *UF* 19 (1987), 161-174; M. Delcor, "Le culte de la 'Reine du Ciel' selon Jer 7,18; 44,17-19.25 et ses survivances: Aspects de la religion populaire féminine aux alentours de l'Exil en Juda et dans les communautés juives d'Égypte," in W. C. Delsman et al. (eds.), *Von Kanaan bis Kerala: Festschrift für J. P. van der Ploeg zur Vollendung des siebzigsten Lebensjahres am 4. Juli 1979* (AOAT 211; Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker, 1982), 101-122.

14 I wish to thank in a special way Mark S. Smith and Elizabeth Bloch-Smith because this paper in its final form has benefited a lot from our dialogue on the topic of Ishtar, even though the conclusions presented here are my own.

2. Astarte-Ashtoret

Since the biblical references to Astarte-Ashtoret are not so many, it will be convenient to recall each one. We follow here the biblical order for the most part.

Judges 2:11-13

> Then the sons of Israel did evil in the sight of Yhwh and served the Baals (הבעלים). [12]They forsook Yhwh, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods from among the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed themselves down to them; thus they provoked Yhwh to anger. [13]So they forsook Yhwh and served (ויעבדו) the Baal (לבעל) and the Ashtarot (ולעשתרות).

All occurrences of Baal or Ashtarot in this passage, when vocalized, have the determinative: it is about *the* Baal, *the* Baals and *the* Ashtarot. The last of these seems to be a common plural feminine form (עשתרות). However N. Wyatt has proposed a new hypothesis concerning the vocalisation of the Hebrew name of Astarte (Wyatt 1999, 210).[15] He suggests that the *ʿAshtarat(u)* form could have evolved into an *ʿAshtarot* (*ʿaštārôt*), just as Dagan evolved into the biblical Hebrew Dagon. But Wyatt does not exclude the possibility that Ashtarot sometimes has a plural meaning. This hypothesis will be kept in mind, but for our purpose it will not carry much weight. It is true that in v. 13 above it is tempting to consider "Ashtarot" as a singular, since the "Baal" preceding it is also a singular. In that case the couple Baal-Ashtarot/Ashtoret would be emphasized in that great Deuteronomistic chapter as the cause of idolatry and of the final punishment leading in the end to the exile.[16] But in the meanwhile, Yhwh God shows compassion and raises Judges:

> The anger of Yhwh burned against Israel, and he gave them into the hands of plunderers who plundered them; and he sold them into the hands of their enemies around them, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies. [15]Wherever they went, the hand of Yhwh was against them for evil, as Yhwh had spoken and as Yhwh had sworn to them, so that they were severely distressed. [16]Then Yhwh raised up judges who delivered them from the hands of those who plundered them. (Judg 2:14-16)

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15 N. Wyatt "Astarte," *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 210.

16 Ever since the thesis of Martin Noth, the discourses in Deut 1–30; Josh 1and 23; Jdg 2: 6–3:6; I Sam 12; I Kgs 8; II Kgs 17 and 25 have been considered the great pillars of the Deuteronomistic History, which presents an account of the past and origins of Israel through cyclic crises leading to the final exile; M. Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981), translated from *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien* (Halle: Niemeyer, 1943). For a general view on the Deuteronomistic History, see T. Römer, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History: A Sociological, Historical and Literary Introduction* (London: T&T Clark, 2005).

We have here the first example of the Deuteronomistic cycle of crisis, Israelite idolatry and apostasy, which leads Yhwh to anger and then to compassion.

There is a similar passage in the next chapter.

Judges 3:7-8

> The sons of Israel did what was evil in the sight of Yhwh, and forgot Yhwh their God and served the Baals (הבעלים) and the Asherot (האשרות). 8Then the anger of Yhwh was kindled against Israel, so that he sold them into the hands of Cushan-rishathaim king of Aram-Naharaim; and the sons of Israel served Cushan-rishathaim eight years.

One is surprised here to meet "the Baals" in the plural coupled with "the Asherot" (feminine plural of Asherah) and not "the Ashtarot." One is all the more surprised since all other occurrences of the plural "Baals" are associated with Ashtarot. That is why exegetes have often proposed to emend the text. But it is not necessary to do so.[17] As we shall see, the references to Astarte-Ashtoret in the Bible are very few and always polemical, just as those concerning Asherah are. It seems quite clear that both goddesses are associated in the polemic against idolatry by the Deuteronomists. Therefore the occurrence of Asherot where one would expect Ashtarot is not illogical. On the contrary, it shows how the names of both goddesses are blurred by polemical rhetoric and no longer refer to specific divine entities.

The next case of Astarte-Ashtoret is in Judges 10:6-7

> Then the sons of Israel again did evil in the sight of Yhwh, served the Baals (הבעלים) and the Ashtarot (העשתרות), the gods of Aram, the gods of Sidon, the gods of Moab, the gods of the sons of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines; thus they forsook Yhwh and did not serve Him. 7The anger of Yhwh burned against Israel, and he sold them into the hands of the Philistines and into the hands of the sons of Ammon.

With this third example the polemical rhetoric becomes clear. Diverse techniques are used: the repetition of the same phrases ("to do evil in the sight of Yhwh," "to serve other gods," "to forsake Yhwh," "to kindle his anger"), the repetition of the same scheme of divine retribution, and, most important for our purpose, the stress on the same divine couple Baals/Ashtarot amidst the many other gods that are mentioned here but are never (or rarely) called by name. It becomes important to underline the recurrent plural form of the divine couple. The Deuteronomists seem to refer both to Baal and Ashtoret/ Ashtarot (whatever its form in the singular is) as generic names. Therefore

[17] Saul Olyan has proposed that Astarte, not Ashera, had been the consort of Baal, Ashera being Yhwh's consort. This association would thus not be historical, but the work of the Deuteronomists eager to discredit the cult of Ashera; S. Olyan, *Asherah and the Cult of Yahweh in Israel* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1988), 9-11.

at this point the same phenomenon observed in Mesopotamian sources,[18] in Mari and in South-Arabia, seems to be confirmed by the biblical witnesses.

I Samuel 7:2-4

> From the day that the ark remained at Kiriath-Yearim, the time was long, for it was twenty years; and all the house of Israel lamented after Yhwh. [3]Then Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel, saying, “If you return to Yhwh with all your heart, remove the foreign gods (אלהי הנכר) and the Ashtarot (והעשתרות) from among you and direct your hearts to Yhwh and serve him alone, he will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines.” [4]So the sons of Israel removed the Baals (הבעלים) and the Ashtarot (העשתרות) and served Yhwh alone.

Here Ashtarot is again clearly a plural, as it is associated first with “foreign gods” and then with the Baals. It is also worth noting that the Septuagint has translated the second occurrence by “the Baals and the groves-Ashtarot” (τα αλση Ασταρωθ).[19] The reference to groves shows once more the continuing confusion between Astarte and Asherah, as the latter, as we shall see, is associated with groves, green trees and hills, especially in the plural form (Asherim). The confusion in our opinion is again polemical.

I Samuel 12:8-11

> When Jacob went into Egypt and your fathers cried out to Yhwh, then Yhwh sent Moses and Aaron who brought your fathers out of Egypt and settled them in this place. [9]But they forgot Yhwh their God, so he sold them into the hand of Sisera, captain of the army of Hazor, and into the hand of the Philistines and into the hand of the king of Moab, and they fought against them. [10]They cried out to Yhwh and said, “We have sinned because we have forsaken Yhwh and have served the Baals (הבעלים) and the Ashtarot (העשתרות), but now deliver us from the hands of our enemies, and we will serve You.” [11]Then Yhwh sent Jerubbaal and Bedan and Jephthah and Samuel, and delivered you from the hands of your enemies all around, so that you lived in security.

This occurrence is again in one of the great Deuteronomistic chapters, and so we are not surprised to meet the same scheme, expressions, and the divine couple Baals/Ashtarot in the plural. The crisis here is all the more important

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18 See the eighth-century Akkadian inscription from ʿAna on the middle Euphrates mentioned by Mark S. Smith in this volume, describing the goddess Anat as the “strongest of the Astartes/goddesses” (*gaš-rat* ^{d}EŠ$_{4}$.DAR^{meš} l. 2), and as one whose “pre-eminence can not be compared among the Astartes/goddesses” (GAŠAN *šá-ru-uh-tum šá ina* ^{d}EŠ$_{4}$.DAR^{meš} *la iš-šá-an-na-nu* l.4); A. Cavigneaux and B. K. Ismail, “Die Statthalter von Suhu und Mari im 8. Jh. v. Chr.,” *Baghdader Mitteilungen* 21 (1990), 321-456.

19 It is worth noting that in the Septuagint almost every occurrence of Ashera is translated by αλσος. It seems that to the translator Ashera meant nothing more than a place of idolatry. When the reference was obviously to a divinity, the translator named her Astarte (I Kgs 7:3-4, 12:10; II Chr 15:16, 24:18)!

as it is followed by the institution of kingship in Israel (I Sam 12:13). The next occurrences will show some differences, so it is right to underline and tentatively conclude that in the books of Judges and Samuel at least, the Baals coupled with the Ashtarot function as generic names of masculine and feminine divinities. But since their occurrences are always imbedded in the polemical rhetoric against idolatry, more than generic names, they appear as a *terminus technicus* in the Deuteronomistic argument: Baals and Ashtarot are somehow joined as the perfect couple symbolizing idolatry in Israel. They are not referred to so much as divine entities (and for this reason we know next to nothing about their cult), as the materialization of the sin of Israel that will finally lead to exile from the land.

I Samuel 31:10

In the next occurrence we learn that Saul's armor after he died was hung in the temple of Ashtarot (בית עשתרות). This case seems to support Wyatt's theory on the vocalization, as it certainly does refer to the divinity in the singular. Furthermore, note that the divine name bears no article. Of course, we learn nothing about her except that she is the goddess of the Philistines (later references refer to her as the goddess of the Sidonians).

1 Kings 11:5, 33; 2 Kings 23:13

These three references have in common that there is no article and the reference to the goddess is in the singular. Ashtoret[20] goddess of the Sidonians is introduced during the reign of Solomon because of his many foreign wives:

> For Solomon went after Ashtoret the goddess of the Sidonians and after Milkom the detestable idol of the Ammonites (I Kgs 11:5), ...because they have forsaken me, and have worshiped Ashtoret the goddess of the Sidonians, Kamosh the god of Moab, and Milkom the god of the sons of Ammon; and they have not walked in my ways, doing what is right in my sight and observing my statutes and my ordinances, as his father David did. (I Kgs 11:33).

If the goddess is introduced with Solomon, she is so to say ex-troduced with Josiah the good Judean king in the eyes of the Deuteronomists:

> The high places which were before Jerusalem, which were on the right of the mount of destruction which Solomon the king of Israel had built for Ashtoret the abomination of the Sidonians, and for Kamosh the abomination of Moab, and for Milkom the abomination of the sons of Ammon, the king defiled (II Kgs 23:13),

[20] It is usually agreed that the Massoretes vocalized the name according to the noun "shame" (*bōšet*); M. Jastrow, "The Element *boshet* in Hebrew Proper Names," *JBL* 13 (1894), 19-30. This is to be compared with other biblical names such as Ishboshet for Ishbaal, Meriboshet for Meribaal, or even Molek.

and no other reference to her occurs in between, even though the polemic against idolatry recurs in every notice concerning every king of Israel and Judah.

It is clear that the second reference is pointing back to the first, and it is clear also that in associating Solomon with Ashtoret, the writer is suggesting that the institution of kingship itself is flawed from the beginning, and the good will of Josiah will be of no avail in the final catastrophe. The fact that in the book of Kings the goddess is referred to in the singular only and that Solomon himself is involved, points to an official cult, whereas the plural in Judges does not make clear to us whether the cult is an official or just a popular one. Moreover, if the plural is used as a generic name, it cannot inform us of the identity of the goddess designated: is she Astarte, or another feminine goddess such as Asherah? In this sense, even if the singular in the Book of Kings highlights the unique and official that is royal cult of the goddess, we may still ask what her exact identity is. We shall come back to that point. It is, however, no wonder that so few references are made to her, since naming her would give her existence, which is what the Deuteronomists refuse to do: Yhwh alone is God.[21]

It seems that the distinction between singular and plural points to the official/unofficial status of the cult, and this will be our working hypothesis. In the ancient Near East, it must be recalled that official cultic statues are always named after their divinity. The statue itself is but the materialization of the divinity and need not be mentioned.[22] This is all the more important since it reminds one that the question of the relation between the divinity and its representation is a modern concern, not an ancient one. This will be consistent with our analysis of Asherah and Asherim below. But at this point of the analysis, it is clear that the question is no longer circumscribed by some generic use of the singular or plural form of a divinity's name. The question is intrinsically linked to the rhetoric and ideology at work in the Deuteronomistic History.

The remaining references are those where "Ashtarot" is connected with the herd or the flock (Deut 7:13, 28:4, 18, 51) or is part of a place name (see for instance Ashtarot Qarnayim in Gen 14:5 and also Deut 1:4; Josh 9:10, 12:4, 13:12, 31; I Chr 6:71, 11:44). The latter need no further explanation, but for the former Judith Hadley has convincingly proposed the concept of de-deification: the name of the goddess and those of other gods in Deuteronomy, Dagon and Tirosh, are used not as divine names, but as

[21] Similarly, Milkom god of the Ammonites is rarely named in the Bible (II Sam 12:30; I Kgs 11:5; I Chr 8:9; 20:2; Isa 3:15; Jer 30:9; 49:1, 3; Hos 3:5; Amos 1:15; Mic 2:13), and Kamosh god of the Moabites, even less (Num 21:29; Judg 11:24; I Kgs 11:7, 33; II Kgs 23:13; Jer 48:7, 13, 46).

[22] S. Anthonioz, *'À qui me comparerez-vous?' (Is 40,25): La polémique contre l'idolâtrie dans le Deutéro-Isaïe* (Paris: Cerf, 2011), 35-43.

common nouns referring to their blessings. But of course Yhwh alone is the source of that blessing, here the blessing of the flocks.[23]

In sum, what we see is that the polemic against idolatry in the Deuteronomistic History displays more than one technique. It is interesting to notice that the technique used differs according to the book. For example, the de-deification at work in Deuteronomy is not found elsewhere in the books of the Deuteronomistic History. Moreover these techniques seem consistent with the overall biblical chronology and ideology. And so the singular feminine Ashtoret is only connected with kings and the official, that is the royal, cult, whereas the plural is attested only before kingship arose in Israel, that is during the period of the Judges and that of Samuel. In that sense, the royal responsibility in rendering the cults official is all the more underlined. If it can be argued that Ashtoret/Ashtarot is used in a generic sense in biblical sources, one must admit the limited scope of the biblical use and the ideology and theology at work. That the expression "the Baals and the Ashtarot" can be assimilated to Akkadian *ilānu u ištarātu*[24] is clearly possible, but the difference is immense because under the pen of the Deuteronomistic scribe it has become nothing else than a *terminus technicus* annihilating all other gods! Moreover one has to remain cautious on the identity of the goddess referred to: Astarte or Asherah? The fact that Astarte/Ashtoret is in-troduced with Solomon only to be ex-troduced with Josiah could also be another device of the Deuteronomists eager to link idolatry to the foreign cults and gods. If all other references to a feminine goddess in the Books of Kings are to Asherah, is it not possible that in bracketing the references by those opening and closing ones to Ashtoret (I Kings 11:5, II Kings 23:13), the redactor intended to give Asherah a foreign identity? Asherah is thus subversively turned into a foreign goddess, making the polemic all the more powerful as she becomes one of those foreign divinities.

3. Asherah and Asherim

Let us now turn to Asherah.[25] The root of the name is clearly different from that of Astarte and has been connected to the North-West Semitic **ʾṯr*, meaning "to follow (in the footsteps of)." This is consistent with the fact that in the ancient sources, the goddess is commonly the consort of the main god.[26] Just as the god El is the prototype of all gods since his name means

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23 J. Hadley, "The De-deification of Deities in Deuteronomy," in R. P. Gordon, *The God of Israel* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 157-174; "Fertility of the Flock? The De-Personalization of Astarte in the Old Testament," in B. Becking and M. Dijkstra (eds.), *On Reading Prophetic Texts* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 115-133.

24 A. Lenore Perlman, *Asherah and Astarte in the Old Testament and Ugaritic Literatures* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1979), 183.

25 The bibliography on the subject is wide, so only those references necessary for our demonstration will be cited.

26 B. Margalit, "The Meaning and Significance of Asherah," *VT* 40 (1990), 264-297

power, and Baal the prototype of all husbands, so Asherah becomes the prototype of all spouses, feminine and fertile. Athirat is well known at Ugarit where she appears as "mother of the gods" (*qnyt ilm*) and wet-nurse of the kings. Her main divine epithet connects her to the world of the sea (*'ṯrt ym*).[27] Ashratu is also attested in Mari (^{d}*Aš-ra-tum* and ^{d}*A-ši-ra-tum*) where she is the consort of the god Amurru, but here connected to the world of the steppes and mountains like her husband. If one considers the main characteristic of the goddess, one is not surprised to find her as consort of Yhwh in Israel. And so Margalit has not hesitated to accept the interpretation of the famous Kuntillet Ajrud and Khirbet el-Qom inscriptions as "Yhwh and *his* Asherah," Yhwh being identified with Baal or El.[28] David N. Freedman has proposed that because Asherah was venerated in many places it was necessary to distinguish her like Ishtar.[29] He adds that if Asherah appears to be the consort of Baal in I Kgs 18:19, she can not be other than that of Yhwh in II Kgs 13:6. But many have opposed this theory arguing that Asherah is but a cultic object as commonly attested in the Bible and that technically on linguistic grounds it was impossible for a proper name to bear a possessive suffix: no example is in fact attested in the Bible.[30] Judith Hadley has for her part interpreted the Khirbet el-Qom and Kuntillet Ajrud inscription as referring to a symbol rather than to the goddess herself, though she finds elsewhere in the meagre material from Lachish, Pella, Taanach, Tel Miqne and Jerusalem reason for associating Asherah with Yhwh.[31]

Asherah is quite well known in the Bible, where she appears as a goddess (I Kgs 15:13, 18:19; II Kgs 21:3, 23:4f). However her cult is not better known than that of Astarte-Ashtoret. The biblical complexity is made worse by the common use of the plural form Asherim alongside the singular Asherah.

(hereafter Margalit, 1990). Maier proposes that the root and vocalization of the Ugaritic Athirat signifies "the one advancing," but that as a common noun the word designates a holy place or a sanctuary; W. Maier, *Ašerah: Extrabiblical Evidence* (HSM 37; Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1987), 194; see also R. Hess, "Asherah or Asherata," *Orientalia* 65 (1996), 209-219.

27 F. M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 67. Binger has however proposed connecting her to the "day" and not the sea (same consonants); T. Binger, *Asherah: Goddesses in Ugarit, Israel and the Old Testament* (JSOTS 232; Sheffield: Academic Press, 1997); T. Binger, "Ashera in Israel," *SJOT* 9 (1995), 3-18.

28 Margalit, 1990, 284; see also W. Dever, "Archaeology and the Ancient Israelite Cult: How the Kh. el-Qôm and Kuntillet Ajrûd Asherah Texts Have Changed the Picture," *Eretz-Israel* 26 (Frank Moore Cross Volume; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1999), 9*-15*; W. Dever "Asherah, Consort of Yahweh? New Evidence from Kuntillet Ajrûd," *BASOR* 255 (1984), 21-37.

29 D. N. Freedman, "Yahweh of Samaria and His Asherah," *BA* 50 (1987), 241-249.

30 J. Emerton, "'Yahweh and His Asherah': The Goddess or Her Symbol?" *VT* 49 (1999), 315-337; Smith, *Early History*, 118.

31 J. Hadley, "Yahweh and 'His Asherah': Archaeological and Textual Evidence for the Cult of the Goddess," in *Ein Gott allein?* (OBO 139; Fribourg: Universitätsverlag, 1994), 235-268.

What is the exact relation between the plural and the singular forms? Does the plural simply refer to an object? Roland de Vaux has synthesized the biblical data in a very useful way:[32] Asherah has to be considered as both the representation of the goddess and as a cultic object or symbol. In the Bible she appears as the consort of Baal in two instances (Judg 3:7 and 2 Kgs 23:4). And when the cultic object is referred to, it is made of wood (Jdg 6:26) that one can cut (Exod 34:13, Jdg 6:25) or burn (Deut 12:3; II Kgs 23:6, 15). It can also be a living tree that one plants (Deut 16:21) or roots out (Mic 5:13; II Kgs 23:14). Most commonly it is fashioned (I Kgs 14:15, 16:33; II Kgs 17:16, 21:3; Isa 17:8) and erected as a stele (II Kgs 13:6, 17:10; Isa 27:9) reminding one of a pole. And de Vaux concludes: "We cannot specify its appearance and there is no proof that this pole was sculpted to represent the goddess." Defining the Asherim has thus been a very difficult task, often governed by theological presuppositions. A cautious position has often been preferred: the Asherah is both goddess and cultic object.[33] The exact relation between the two is not clear, but it seems that there has been an evolution from the divinity to the purely cultic or symbolic object. It seems to me that at this point it is necessary to remember that such an evolution is the vision that emerges from a biblical and specifically Deuteronomistic view: reducing divinities to mere objects without life and incapable of giving life, is it not the very heart of the polemic against idolatry? One has to remember again that statues and other cultic objects were understood as divine in themselves and referred to accordingly.[34]

The working hypothesis I wish to test here is based on the results of the preceding case of Astarte. I distinguish the plural from the singular forms of

[32] R. de Vaux, *Les Institutions de l'Ancien Testament*, vol. 2, *Les Institutions militaires; Les Institutions religieuses* (Paris: Cerf, 1960), 110f.

[33] R. Pettey, *Asherah: Goddess of Israel* (New York: Lang, 1990); J. Day, "Asherah in the Hebrew Bible and Northwest Semitic Literature," *JBL* 105 (1986), 408; W. Reed, *The Nature and Function of the Asherah in Israelite Religion According to Literary and Archaeological Evidence* (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International, 1982); W. Reed, *The Asherah in the Old Testament* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1949).

[34] An interesting point has been made by K. Slanski relating to the famous Sippar Šamaš Tablet where the Sun God, in the absence of his statue destroyed by the Sutean invasion under king Adad-apla-iddina (1068-1047), is represented by the symbol of a disc. The symbol is officially replacing the statue until the god reveals the model of his statue, and king Nabu-apla-iddina (887-855) immediately has the statue made according to the model; K. Slanski, "Classification, Historiography and Monumental Authority: The Babylonian Entitlement *narû*s (*kudurru*s)," *JCS* 52 (2000), 95-114. In another article, the author developed that idea with relation to other divine symbols such as socles, pedestals, weapons or pictures. She writes: "While divine symbols and divine cult images are both representations of the gods, they are representations on a very different order. Nonetheless, the symbol is a representation of the divine, and does signal, if not the god in his anthropomorphic eating/drinking/listening persona, some aspect of his power, strength, and character"; K. Slanski, "Representation of the Divine on the Babylonian Entitlement Monuments (*kudurru*s), Part I: Divine Symbols," *AfO* 50 (2003-2004), 316.

the name and test their function. As in the case of Astarte, does the singular refer to the official representation of the divinity? And does the plural allude to general cults located anywhere and everywhere (as opposed to the official cult necessarily located in the official place, that chosen by the divinity itself)? The best way to proceed now is to go through all the passages in the biblical order of the Deuteronomistic history mentioning "Asherah," and then through those mentioning "Asherim."

The first occurrence of "Asherah" is given in the Deuteronomic Law:

> You shall not plant for yourself an Asherah (אשרה) of any kind of tree beside the altar of Yhwh your God (אצל מזבח יהוה), which you shall make for yourself.[22] You shall not set up for yourself a sacred pillar (מצבה) which Yhwh your God hates. (Deut 16:21-22)

According to the context, it is clear that the Deuteronomic law is referring to some official cult of the goddess (note the absence of the determinative) "beside the altar of Yhwh," that is in the temple. The existence of such a law implies that the situation prohibited may well have existed. And if so, one is led to acknowledge that Asherah was also considered the consort of Yhwh. Otherwise the Deuteronomic law itself would not make sense.

Judges 6:25-26

> Now on the same night Yhwh said to Gideon, "Take your father's bull and a second bull seven years old, and pull down the altar of Baal which belongs to your father, and cut down the Asherah (ואת־האשרה) that is beside it (אשר עליו),[26] and build an altar to Yhwh your God on the top of this stronghold in an orderly manner, and take a second bull and offer a burnt offering with the wood of the Asherah which you shall cut down."

Because the Asherah is standing "beside" the altar of Baal this time, and because the cult of Baal is at the time of Gideon's father the official cult, this reference confirms our working hypothesis. Though the cults of Baal and "his" Asherah are condemned by the Deuteronomists, their official status is witnessed to nonetheless.

In the course of the books of Kings, Asherah becomes one of the main targets of the polemic against idolatry, in contrast to Astarte, who only opens the book with Solomon and somehow closes it with Josiah, as seen above. Every king is judged according to his deeds and obedience to the law of Yhwh, first and foremost according to his exclusive worship of Yhwh. Therefore Asa king of Judah is judged in a good way since he did what was right in the eyes of Yhwh as his father David had done:

> He also put away the male cult prostitutes from the land and removed all the idols which his fathers had made. [13]He also removed Maaka his mother from

> being queen mother, because she had made a repulsive image for Asherah (מפלצת לאשרה). And Asa cut down her repulsive image (את־המפלצת) and burned it at the brook Kidron. (I Kgs 15:12-13)

Here the connection of Asherah with Baal or Yhwh is not made, but the cult of the goddess is connected to the queen mother who supported it. Therefore the official nature of the devotion is underlined. Next comes Ahab, son of Omri, who did what was wrong in the eyes of Yhwh. Not content with marrying Jezebel the daughter of the king of the Sidonians, he also worshipped Baal:

> So he erected an altar for Baal in the house of Baal which he built in Samaria.[33] Ahab also made the Asherah (האשרה). Thus Ahab did more to provoke Yhwh God of Israel than all the kings of Israel who were before him. (I Kgs 16:32-33)

Once again it is made clear that what is at stake concerning Asherah is the institution of an official cult. This is also clear in the next occurrence, namely the reference to the prophets of Asherah in connection with the reigning Jezebel ("450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of the Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table," I Kgs 18:19). This is again confirmed by the judgment on king Jehoahaz of Israel during whose reign the Asherah remained standing (II Kgs 13:6). With the fall of Samaria the same judgment is pronounced, but this time all Israel is condemned and not their kings alone:

> They forsook all the commandments of Yhwh their God and made for themselves molten images (מסכה), even two calves (שנים עגלים), and made an Asherah (אשירה)[35] and worshiped all the host of heaven and served Baal. (II Kgs 17:16)

After the fall, Judah and its kings fall under the same ban. Hezekiah king of Judah did what was right in the eyes of Yhwh:

> He removed the high places and broke down the pillars and cut down the Asherah (את־האשרה). He also broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made, for until those days the sons of Israel burned incense to it; and it was called Nehushtan. [5]He trusted in the Lord, the God of Israel; so that after him there was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor among those who were before him. (II Kgs 18:4-5)

Manasseh did what was evil in the eyes of Yhwh: he had the high places rebuilt and altars made in honor of Baal as well as an Asherah (II Kgs 21:3). But worst of all:

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35 Note here the absence of the determinative.

> He set the carved image of Asherah (את־פסל האשרה) that he had made, in the house of which Yhwh said to David and to his son Solomon, "In this house and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen from all the tribes of Israel, I will put my name forever." (II Kgs 21:7)

Asherah is thus identified as the goddess who is elevated to the official rank of consort of Yhwh and made to stand with him in his temple. The "objectivation" or insistence on her being a handmade and carved object appears to be, in my view, another tool in the Deuteronomistic polemic against idolatry. And this is evidently the worst sin for the Deuteronomists. And finally Asherah is mentioned in the reform of Josiah where she is identified as consort of Baal (II Kgs 23:4-6) and taken out from the temple of Yhwh along with her vessels and those of Baal. All occurrences to the goddess in the singular have so far confirmed our working hypothesis. In the singular, "Asherah" refers to an official cult, whether it be as consort of Baal in his temple or in the temple of Yhwh.

It remains now to go through all the occurrences of "Asherim." As used in the Deuteronomic law, Asherim evoke not an official but a popular cult; they are not connected with temple, but with mountains, hills and green trees:

> You shall utterly destroy all the places where the nations whom you shall dispossess serve their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree. 3You shall tear down their altars and smash their sacred pillars and burn their Asherim (ואשריהם) with fire, and you shall cut down the engraved images of their gods and obliterate their name from that place. 4You shall not act like this toward Yhwh your God. 5But you shall seek Yhwh at the place which Yhwh your God will choose from all your tribes, to establish his name there for his dwelling, and there you shall come. (Deut 12:2-5)

If the high mountains, hills and every green tree are connected to the "nations," it is part of the Deuteronomistic ideology concerning foreign gods (introduced by foreign wives), epitomized in the expression "other gods." The books of Kings thus display this polemic against popular religion, and Asherim serve in every occurrence as the symbol of this polemic against popular cult (I Kgs 14:15, 23; II Kgs 17:9-10, 23:14). Finally, even outside the Deuteronomistic History, it is worth mentioning that all references to Asherim work in the same sense and in dependence on this polemic (Exod 34:13; Isa 17:8, 27:9; Jer 17:2; Mic 5:13).

4. Conclusion

What can we now conclude? The working hypothesis has proved stimulating. The difference between the use of singular and plural serves the Deuteronomists in constructing their polemic. On the one hand Asherah

is about the official cult (her name and representation being one and the same reality as in ancient Near Eastern sources), on the other hand Asherim are about popular cults and places.[36] Both of course are judged impious, but they are not on the same level. Going back to Astarte where that distinction was first analyzed, it seems clear that the biblical occurrences can not tell us much concerning linguistics, history or religion: is the name of Astarte used as a generic name as elsewhere in the ancient Near East? Was the goddess venerated officially? Was she represented, and how? What was her cult about? We wish we could answer all these questions positively. Alas, the biblical scholar is left with the ideology at work in the Deuteronomistic History, which is persuasively constructed as the accompanying table of occurrences shows.

Table 1: Occurrences of the Goddess Names in the Deuteronomistic History

	Ashtoret	Ashtarot	Asherot	Asherah	Asherim
Deuteronomy				16:21	12:3
Joshua					
Judges		2:11-13 10:6	3:7	6:25-26	
I Samuel		7:3-4 12:10 31:10			
I Kings	11:5, 33			15:13 16:33 18:19	14:15.23
II Kings	23:13			13:6 17:16 18:4 21:3-7 23:4-6	17:10 23:14

[36] Therefore I do not agree with Steve Wiggins, who proposes a diachronic solution to the problem, that the singular Asherah refer to pre-exilic time, and the plural Asherim, to exilic times; S. Wiggins, *A Reassessment of 'Asherah': A Study According to the Textual Sources of the First Two Millennia B.C.E.* (AOAT 235; Kevelaer: Butzon und Bercker & Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1993), 169-170, 186.

Most of all this polemic blurs all "other gods" into one and the same rhetoric against idolatry. In this sense Astarte is confused with Asherah, or more accurately, Asherah is subversively confused with Astarte/Ashtoret. It is therefore not impossible to propose that Asherah is one of the Ashtarot (that is one goddess in the general sense), and at the same time confused with the foreign deity Astarte, thus making the polemic against idolatry all the more powerful. But it remains that if Ashtarot associated with Baalim work as a *terminus technicus* against idolatry, Asherim work as a kind of second level of veneration in the polemic: only one official representation of the goddess would stand in the main temple and be rendered an official cult, but many shrines could be found around high mountains and hills where any one would feel free to go and venerate her.[37] Of course in both cases the Deuteronomistic judgment was without concession. Judged impious and repulsive, they first brought about the end of Samaria, and finally the end of Judah!

[37] This recalls the famous Pillar figurines. Identified with the goddess Ashera since no other goddess is worshipped in the 8th-7th century BCE Judah, Raz Kletter has underlined that these figurines were meant for private devotion only and were of very bad and cheap quality; R. Kletter, "Asherah and the Judean Pillar Figurines engendered," in S. Parpola and R. H. Whiting (eds.), *Sex and Gender in the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the 47th RAI* (Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2002), 291 (for a different view, see the article by David T. Sugimoto in this volume). In this way we would have a kind of a third level of devotion, private devotion, besides the popular and official ones.

The Judean Pillar Figurines and the “Queen of Heaven”

David T. SUGIMOTO

1. Introduction

The Judean Pillar Figurines (JPFs, hereafter) are religious archaeological artifacts unique to Iron Age Judah. They are female figures made of clay, c. 10-20 cm high, whose lower part is fashioned by hand to a pillar shape with a funneled base and whose breasts are emphasized (Fig. 1a, b). There are two types of head: a simple pinched face which seems to express eyes and a beak of a bird, and a more elaborate face made with a mold, though there are minor variations among the figures. Generally they are white-washed, and probably painted, because some examples retain traces of red and black paint.

The JPFs have often been understood as a continued form of Canaanite fertility goddess Asherah in Israel, especially in the Judahite kingdom, and used as evidence for the continuation of Canaanite polytheism until the time of the Babylonian captivity. Dever, for example, develops this view thoroughly in his book *Did God Have a Wife?* (2005).[1]

The view that the goddess Asherah was worshiped in ancient Israel derived from the discovery of Ugaritic texts. At Ugarit, a fertility goddess, Ashirat, was revered as a consort of the creator god, El. The same relationship between El and Ashirat came to be postulated between Yahweh and “Asherah,” and the word asherah in the Hebrew Bible, which was formerly translated as “grove” or alike, came to be understood as the name of a goddess in some cases. On the basis of this view, B. Lang (1983) claimed that in Israel, monotheism was not syncretized and transformed by the influence of Canaanite polytheism, but rather the Israelites were polytheistic from the beginning, just as their Canaanite neighbors.[2] According to him, monotheism started as a minority view of the “Yahweh-alone” movement of the prophets, and it was not fully accepted by the people until the occurrence of the religious crisis during the destruction of the country and the Babylonian captivities.

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1 W. D. Dever, *Did God Have a Wife?: Archaeology and Folk Religion in Ancient Israel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans), 2005.

2 The basic concept of this view had already been formulated by Morton Smith (*Palestinian Parties and Politics That Shaped the Old Testament* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1971]), but it was the book by B. Lang (*Monotheism and the Prophetic Minority* [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1983]) which fully developed it and made it widely known.



a.



b.

Fig. 1: Judean Pillar Figurines

a. with a molded head: M. Dayagi-Mendels and S. Rosenberg, C*hronicles of the Land: Archaeology in the Israel Museum Jerusalem*, 2010, 80; b. with a pinched head: *ibid.*, 81.

Some archaeologists, who catalogued and analyzed the JPFs as archaeological artifacts, also claimed that they are related to Asherah,[3] but they are more nuanced in their views.[4] R. Kletter, for example, wrote in his 1996 book that the "JPF can represent Asherah, without negating magical aspects or relation to magical rituals,"[5] but in his article in 2001, he modified his position:

> "It is important to stress that the identification of the JPFs with Asherah seems very probable, but is not proven and should not be taken for granted. This identification is based on OT sources (together with Kh. El-Qom and Kuntillet ʿAjrud inscriptions) or, to be more correct, on a certain interpretation of these sources."[6]

Indeed the identification of these figurines with Asherah is not so certain. The present writer would like to suggest that they are more likely to be related to the cult of the "Queen of Heaven," a particular kind of Astarte or Ishtar cult introduced in the latter half of the Judahite kingdom. We would like to examine both the possibilities below.

Before the analysis, however, a few methodological discussions are due. Recently, specialists in figurine studies have tended to hesitate to identify a particular type of figurine with a god or a goddess on a one-on-one basis. The present writer, however, still believes that this is a necessary and worthwhile effort in order to gain a realistic understanding of the religious views of the ancient Israelites.

The first reason for such hesitation is that the figurines can be used for other than religious purposes. Five possibilities are often suggested as functions of the figurines:[7] toys for children, didactic tools, depiction of the deceased[8], magic vehicles, and cult figures. However, regardless of the theo-

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3 J. R. Engle, "Pillar Figurines of Iron Age Israel and Asherah/Asherim," Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Pittsburgh (1979), 55, 62; R. Kletter, *The Judean Pillar Figurines and the Archaeology of Asherah* (BAR International Series 636; Oxford: Tempus Reparatum, 1996), 81; *ibid.*, "Between Archaeology and Theology: The Pillar Figurines from Judah and the Asherah," in A. Mazar (ed.), *Studies in the Archaeology of the Iron Age in Israel and Jordan* (JSOTS 331; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 205

4 J. B. Pritchard (*Palestinian Figurines in Relation to Certain Goddesses Known through Literature* [AOS 24; New Haven, CT, 1943]) and T. Holland ("Typological and Archaeological Study of Human and Animal Representations in the Plastic Art of Palestine," Ph.D. Thesis, Oxford, 1975) also collected and analyzed the JPFs and other types of figurines, but they did not identify them.

5 Kletter, *Judean Pillar Figurines*, 81.

6 Kletter, "Archaeology and Theology," 205.

7 These five possible functions are based on M. M. Voigt, *Hajji Firuz Tepe, Iran: The Neolithic Settlement* (Hasanlu Excavation Reports Vol. 1; Philadelphia: The University Museum, 1983), 186-189.

8 For example, M. Tadmor ("Female Cult Figurines in Late Canaan and Early Israel: Archaeological Evidence," in T. Ishida [ed.], *Studies in the Period of David and Solomon and Other Essays* [Tokyo: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1982], 139-173) once claimed that figurines similar to "concubine plaques" in Egypt are representations of the deceased.

ry, very few scholars who have analyzed the unearthed figurines from Israel in detail have claimed that they have purposes other than magic or religious.[9] Thus, it is fairly natural to start the discussion with these possibilities.

The second reason for scholars' reluctance is that a figurine may not represent a goddess but rather a human woman. Iron Age figurines from Israel usually do not have typical signs of divinity such as a crown or horns, which are often found in Bronze Age figurines, and therefore they could be regarded as representations of human women. On the other hand, neither in the Hebrew Bible nor in inscriptional evidences is it recorded that human women were the object of worship in ancient Judah. Although these figurines depict actual characteristics of human women, it is more likely that they represent a person related to divinities, such as cult personnel or worshipers, or an attribute of gods.[10] If so, these female figurines are likely to reflect some aspects of related divinities.

In this regard, it is interesting that a female figure holding her breasts is depicted as an object of worship in the seal found at Lachish (Fig. 2). The figure is depicted frontally, wears tight clothes, and has a posture very similar to that of the JPF. A man on the left side raises his hand in reverence. If we can relate it to the JPF, it may suggest that there was a practice of worshiping such figures in the late Iron Age Judah.[11]

Third, it is possible that a certain type of figurine represents multiple gods/goddesses, or vice versa, with their meaning changing depending on the period and the area, or on the gods themselves becoming conflated or changing their natures. In Iron Age Judah, however, no other goddess except Asherah, Astarte, and the "Queen of Heaven," whose nature is viewed as being similar to that of Astarte,[12] are known, and the practical possibilities of matching a figurine to a particular goddess are rather limited.[13] The sheer number of un-

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This, however, is an interpretation of a rather rare type of figurine in the southern Levant, and it is hard to apply this view to other types of figurines. Majority of figurines are in fact unearthed from contexts other than tombs.

9 In the current ethnology, the close relationship between these two concepts is commonly recognized, and it is not worth distinguishing them precisely. For more detailed discussions, see D. T. Sugimoto, *Female Figurines with a Disk from the Southern Levant and the Formation of Monotheism* (Tokyo: Keio University Press, 2008), 6.

10 The present writer interpreted "female figurines with a disk" as also representing human women (Sugimoto, *Female Figurines*, 74-75). Their "hand-drum," however, is a symbol of "victory," which originally was governed by Astarte, but later was absorbed into the attributes of Yahweh in Israel.

11 However, this seal design does not suggest the continuation of the practice from the Canaanite period. Although it is from an unstratified context and cannot be dated exactly, the style of the figure is similar to that of the Iron Age figurines, not the Late Bronze Age ones, and there is no evidence for a direct connection between the two types of figurines (see the discussion later in this paper). The author is grateful to Ch. Uehlinger for pointing out the significance of the seal for this issue (personal communication).

12 See the discussion in 3.1 below.

13 Some other gods in neighboring countries such as Phoenicia, Philistia, and Transjordan are known to us, but nevertheless compared to the situation that more than one hundred



Fig. 2: A seal from Lachish

O. Keel and Ch. Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel*, Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998, fig. 323; cf. O. Tufnell, *Lachish III*, London: PEF, 1953, pl. 44/44A. 124.

earthed JPFs suggests that they were so widely used that it is improbable that they are related to a goddess that was not once recorded. The people of this time period should have had a clear understanding of what the figurines represented, and unless we clarify the boundary of their meaning, we cannot properly understand the peoples' religious views. In the following discussion, the possibilities that the JPFs represented multiple goddesses, goddesses became conflated with each other or changed over time, and their relationship with Yahweh will be considered, but, practically, the discussion will center around these two groups of goddess, Asherah and the "Queen of Heaven."

2. JPF and Asherah

2.1 The Form of JPF and Asherah

R. Hestrin[14] is one of the archaeologists who positively identified the JPFs with Asherah. She analyzed the form of the JPFs together with other religious artifacts, and argued that they represent Asherah, a fertility goddess and a consort of Yahweh, based on their large breasts and tree-trunk-like lower body. Dever basically accepts her view.[15]

gods are listed in the pantheon list at Ugarit, their number is much less. Because Anat was already obsolete in Israel during the Iron Age, practically speaking, the possibilities are limited to the Asherah-type fertility goddess and the Astarte-type goddess, including the "Queen of Heaven."

14 R. Hestrin, "The Lachish Ewer and the Asherah," *IEJ* 37 (1987), 212-223.

15 Dever, *Wife,* 232.

However, the lower body of the figurines is a simple cylinder shape with a funneled base, and it does not show any feature that represents a tree trunk or roots. Moreover, this is the simplest form to support a female torso on the base, and it does not have to be seen as an expression of a tree. A similar design can be found in bird figurines or footed lamps, but their bases are never understood as tree trunks. It is true that in the Canaanite polytheism during the Middle and the Late Bronze Age, a tree and a female genital were used as symbols for a fertility goddess (Fig. 3),[16] but solely on this aspect of the form of the figurines, it is difficult to show that the same religious view continued.

On the lower body of these figurines, a female genital is not depicted; judging from paintings and other types of pillar figurines, it is probable that they wear something like a skirt on the lower body. Thus it is not clear whether the figurines emphasize pregnancy or sexual attraction, and the difference between them and the figurines and pendants during the Late Bronze Age becomes clearer.[17] I. Cornelius identifies four types of female figurines from the Late Bronze Age in this volume: the Qedeshet type, a type that is a woman supporting the breasts, a type that is a woman whose hands are at the sides, and a type that is a woman whose hands are on the lower body. They may represent different goddesses, but all of them clearly show genitals, yet some do not even show breasts.[18] It is true that the type that supports the breasts is in similar to the JPFs, but because the JPFs do not display a genital, and they cannot be exactly the same as the Late Bronze Age type.

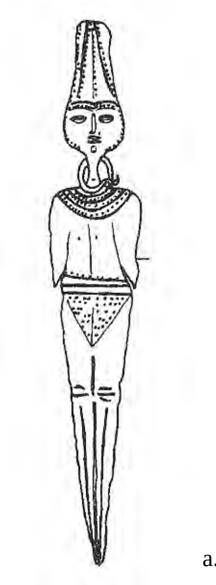
2.2 Date of JPF and Asherah

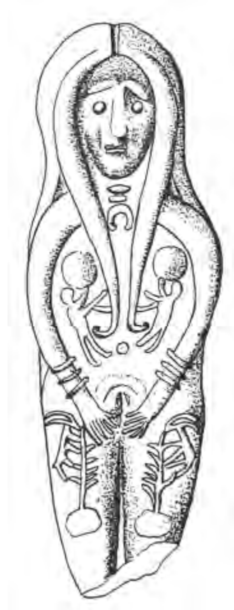
The continuity between the JPFs and the Late Bronze Age (Canaanite) female figurines and pendants can also be rejected on the basis of the dates when they were likely to have been used. Kletter's catalog (1996) has already shown that the JPFs are basically figurines found in the strata of the 8th and 7th century BCE or later, and almost no figurine from a date earlier than that has been discovered. Although Kletter himself supported the view that

[16] O. Keel, *Goddesses and Trees, New Moon and Yahweh* (JSOTS 261; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 20-36. Cf. also D. T. Sugimoto, "Significance of the 'Tree of Life' Decoration on Iron Age Pottery from Israel," in *Orient* 47 (2012), 125-146.

[17] The JPFs emphasize breasts, and this suggests that they represent mothers who nurse children (*Dea nutrix*) rather than pregnancy or delivery. On the other hand, the female figurines and pendants from the Middle and the Late Bronze Age, stress female genitals, and it has already been pointed out that they functioned as a symbol of a fertility goddess together with the symbol of the "tree of life" and water. Perhaps we need to pay more attention to the differences among pregnancy, nursing or nurturing, and sexual attraction.

[18] In figurines made of clay and other artifacts depicting a female figure from the Middle and the Late Bronze Age, a female genital is almost always clearly represented with a dotted triangle or a similar shape, but it is not rare to abbreviate the expression of breasts. For example, a sheet-gold figurine from the Middle Bronze Age Gezer, Late Bronze Age figurines made of clay showing twins inside the womb, and pottery painted with a triangular "tree of life" do emphasize a female genital but not breasts (see Fig. 3).


a.


b.


c.

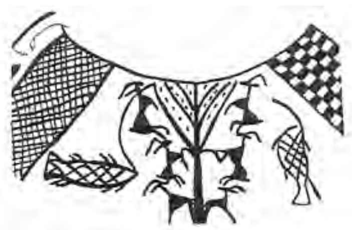

d.

Fig. 3: Female figures and painted pottery from the Middle and Late Bronze Age

a. O. Keel and Ch. Uehlinger, 1998, fig. 24; b. Keel, *Goddesses and Trees*, 1998, fig. 52; c. G. Loud, *Megiddo II: Seasons of 1935-39* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press,1948), pl. 64.4; d. J. L. Starkey and L. Harding, *Beth-Pelet II* (London: British School of Archaeology in Egypt, 1932), pl. LVIII.

the JPFs represent Asherah, the fact that no JPFs from the four hundred years between 1200 BCE and 800 BCE have been found suggests that there is no direct relationship with the figurines from the Late Bronze Age, no matter what the JPFs signify.[19] Byrne addresses this point:

> "The larger artifact family of so-called fertility figurines emerges as early as the Neolithic period in the Near East; it persists through and beyond the Iron Age. These figurines admit to a cross-cultural object of reference, but the referent touchstones are nevertheless tethered to specific ideas in each of those cultures… It is difficult to imagine that fertility figurines bore identical meaning for families on Late Bronze Age Cyprus and families in Judah in the years 712, 702 or 700 BCE."[20]

2.3. Literary Sources and Asherah

The idea that the Canaanite goddess Asherah persisted in the latter half of the Iron Age, the period in which the JPFs appeared, cannot be clearly established even by literary sources.

In the Hebrew Bible, the word "A/asherah" appears forty times, but there are only five passages that might indicate a goddess (Jdg 3:7; I Kgs 15:13; 18:19; II Kgs 21:7; 23:4). In other passages, expressions such as "to erect," "to cut down," and so forth are used, and they clearly suggest an artificial cult tool. Yet even these five passages do not necessarily refer to a goddess.

I Kings 18:19 is a famous passage that narrates that Elijah, the prophet, contested against "the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and four hundred prophets of Asherah." Because the term A/asherah is paralleled with Baal here, and there are prophets for A/asherah, it is often argued that this A/asherah refers to a goddess. However, the phrase "prophets of A/asherah" does not appear again later in this narrative, and it is often regarded as a later gloss. As Mark S. Smith suggests, the identification of A/asherah with a goddess is also historically improbable, because the combination of Baal of Tyre and Asherah is not known anywhere except in a few dubious passages in the Hebrew Bible (see below), and he is usually related to Astarte.[21]

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19 Out of 143 samples from secure contexts, 142 are from after the eighth century, and one sample is from the ninth-eighth century context (cf. Kletter, *The Judean Pillar Figurines*, 40-42, and figs. 12-13).

20 R. Byrne, "Lie Back and Think of Judah: The Reproductive Politics of Pillar Figurines," *Near Eastern Archaeology* 67/3 (2004), 148. Cf. also the criticism by S. Ahituv ("Did God Really Have a Wife?" *Biblical Archaeology Review* 32-5 [2006], 62-66).

21 Mark S. Smith, *The Early History of God: Yahweh and the Other Deities in Ancient Israel* (San Francisco: Harper & Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002[2], 1990), 126-127. E. Lipiński ("The Goddess Aṯirat in Ancient Arabia, in Babylon, and in Ugarit," *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica* 3 [1972], 101-19) also points out that Asherah cannot be found in Phoenician and Punic inscriptions after this period (cf. also A. Lemaire, "Déesses et dieux de Syrie-Palestine d'après les inscriptions [c. 1000-500 av. n. è.]," in W. Dietrich and M. A. Klopfenstein [eds.], *Ein Gott allein?* (OBO 139; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag &

Whether this is a later gloss or an intentional rewriting by the writer of Kings, why was A/asherah inserted instead of Astarte? J. Day suggests that Asherah was still regarded as a goddess and that her name was introduced because the Deuteronomistic historian wanted to criticize her.[22] However, for the Deuteronomistic historian, both Astarte and Asherah were objects of criticism, and there is no particular reason that he had to change Astarte to another goddess. This phenomenon is better explained if this A/asherah is considered as a sacred pole, a cult tool. During the Canaanite period, A/asherah was the name of a fertility goddess, and a sacred pole was her symbol. In the Israelite period, however, A/asherah probably ceased to mean a goddess, and the sacred pole was incorporated into the Yahweh cult; it was reinterpreted as a symbol of fertility and as a sign of the blessings of Yahweh. Then, another fertility goddess, Astarte, was introduced to Israel from Phoenicia, and she was conflated with the sacred pole asherah, because both are related to fertility. Admittedly, this reconstruction is highly speculative, but it is easier to suppose such a process than to assume the exchange of Astarte with a completely different goddess, Asherah.

It is also often argued that A/asherah in I Kings 15:13 "a horrid thing (*mipleṣet)* for A/asherah" and in II Kings 21:7 "the image of A/asherah" (*pesel hā'šērâ)*" must signify a goddess, because if asherah is already a kind of image, then it is hard to picture that image.[23] These phrases are indeed somewhat awkward, but they can be understood as a means to stress their abominable nature and do not have to be interpreted as a goddess.[24]

II Kings 23:4 reads: "the vessels made for the Baal, the Asherah, and all the host of heaven," and this A/asherah is often understood as a goddess because Baal and "the host of heaven" refer to divinities.[25] However, the literary context clearly suggests that A/asherah in this case does not signify a goddess herself but rather some cultic tool. This A/asherah was "erected" (21:7) and "dragged out" (23:6), and the clothes were dedicated to it (23:7).[26] It is likely that "the host of heaven" points to some astronomical body, but it is not clear whether this is a proper name of a god; therefore, this combination does not require A/asherah to be a name of a god. It is perfectly possible

Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994), 135.

22 J. Day, *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan* (JSOTS 265; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 45.

23 See, for example, Day, *Yahweh*, 43-44.

24 M. S. Smith (*Early History*, 128) suggests that the latter was a "more elaborate form of the Asherah."

25 See Day, *Yahweh*, 43.

26 Cf. J. M. Hadley, *The Cult of Asherah in Ancient Israel and Judah: Evidence for a Hebrew Goddess* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 71-72; M. S. Smith, *Early History*, 91. The possibility that this cult tool was in fact a figure of the goddess cannot be completely ruled out, but compared to other instances; it is more probable that it was a sacred pole. Even if it was a cult tool, because a sacred tree, asherah, represented religious ideas such as fertility and blessings, it is not strange that the vessels were offered to it.

that a sacred pole, a cult symbol of "fertility," is listed together with two other cultic elements.[27]

In Judges 3:7, "Baalim and Asherot (feminine plural form of "A/asherah")" are often understood as the expression of "foreign gods and goddesses in general" (cf. Anthonioz in this volume). It is true that the term does not speak of a particular goddess, but it is also not certain whether A/asherot here means a goddess. If Asherot is used for goddesses in general, just as Baalim is employed to speak for male gods in general, then we would expect to see the plural form of Astarte as in Judges 2:13; I Samuel 7:4; 12:10. Because different expressions are used, we need to explore the possibility that they refer to something different, even though they may be somehow related.[28] Here, it is more natural to understand that the verse means that various gods and sacred poles are to be criticized. Even if the Deuteronomistic historian changed the original "Baalim and Ashtarot (*ʿaštārôt*)" in order to criticize A/asherah,[29] it does not suggest that A/asherot means goddesses. As discussed above, it is easier to believe that sacred poles were understood as a symbol of the fertility goddess Astarte than that the word meant a completely different goddess. It is difficult to find a reason why the Deuteronomistic historian had to criticize Asherah more than Astarte, even rejecting a common idiom.

In general, the understanding of A/asherah as a sacred pole, a symbol of fertility and blessings, became common, and it was probably difficult to regard it as a name of an independent goddess at the same time.[30] Deuteronomy16:21 (cf. also II Kgs 13:6) records that asherah, a sacred pole, was used as a tool for the Yahwistic cult; there is no positive evidence that this asherah symbolized a consort of Yahweh, especially in view of the fact that nowhere in the Bible does the term clearly suggest a goddess. It is better to understand that asherah, the sacred pole, had already lost its identity as a fertility goddess, and was absorbed into Yahweh's attributes as a symbol of fertility. Passages like Hosea 2:10-11 [E8-9], 23-25 [E21-23]; 14:6-9 [E5-8] reflect that the attribute of fertility were incorporated into Yahweh; this is also true from the fact that a tree of life stood in the center of the Garden of Eden (Gen 2:9; 3:24).

This understanding also suits the "Yahweh and his A/asherah" inscriptions from Kuntillet ʿAjrud and Khirbet el-Qom.[31] These inscriptions have

27 Admittedly, this sacred pole could have reminded people of the goddess Astarte, just as in the case of I Kings 18:19.

28 It is difficult to accept that both plural forms of *Asherah* and *ʿaštārôt* signify goddesses in general. If *ʿaštārôt* is used as a general term for goddesses, then it is the representative goddess; it is more logical to conclude that *asherot* means something different, such as a sacred pole.

29 The unusual feminine plural form might suggest this possibility.

30 Dever (*Wife*, 100-102) argues that the Biblical writer/editor, who did not want to admit the existence of Asherah, avoided the word. However, there is no reason why the Biblical writer, who did not hesitate to openly criticize Baal and the "Queen of Heaven," had to avoid her name.

31 For more detailed discussion, see Sugimoto, "'Tree of Life'" (n. 16). G. Gilmour ("An

been taken to signify "Yahweh and his consort Asherah" and used as supports to find the goddess Asherah in the Hebrew Bible. Most scholars, however, admit that this interpretation is grammatically difficult, because in Biblical Hebrew, divine names cannot take a pronominal suffix.[32] Those scholars who try to find a goddess here tend to suggest that although "A/asherah" here literally means a cult tool such as a sacred pole, it was indirectly understood as a stand-in for a goddess.[33] However, no matter what the sacred pole reminded people of, it still did not signify the goddess directly. The situation was such that direct reference to the goddess was avoided, and "asherah" had to be understood as a cult tool for Yahweh at least at face value.

Thus, there is no clear evidence among the biblical and inscriptional sources stating that "A/asherah" was an independent goddess during the kingdoms of Israel and Judah; this makes it difficult to relate the JPFs to Asherah.

2.4. Changing Religious Climate between the Late Bronze Age and the Iron Age as Reflected in Archaeological Artifacts

A major change in people's religious circumstances between the Late Bronze Age and the Iron Age can be observed not only in the JPFs but also in other religious artifacts.

The present writer has already collected and analyzed all the known samples of "female figurines with a disk," another known type of female figurine from the neighboring areas during the Iron Age.[34] The figurines and pendants with a feminine figure before the Late Bronze Age usually display divine symbols such as a crown, horns, and Hathor locks, and the figure stands on animals such as a lion. However, a new type of figurines with a disk was introduced in the beginning of the Iron Age. Most of them bear no such symbols, and no sign of a goddess can be found in them (Fig. 4). The distribution of this type of figurine centers in the northern part of Israel between the 12th century BCE and the first half of the 9th century BCE, but after this period the center moved to Phoenicia, Transjordan and Edom, and these figurines became rare in Israel. In Phoenicia, there were more variations in the forms of figurines, and they started to appear in a wider variety of contexts and with other religious artifacts. In Judah, they were rare from the beginning of the

Iron Age II Pictorial Inscription from Jerusalem Illustrating Yahweh and Asherah," *PEQ* 142 [2009], 87-103) recently reexamined a pottery sherd excavated in the 1920s from the City of David, Jerusalem, on which a pair of male and female figures are incised. He dated it to the eighth century BCE and claimed that these figures represent a combination of Yahweh and Asherah. However, his view is heavily based on a particular interpretation of these inscriptions and the dating is far from clear. Instead, the sherd more likely dates to Iron Age IIA or earlier, considering its archaeological context, pottery typology, and iconographic parallels, and cannot serve as evidence for faith at such a late date.

32 Cf. J. A. Emerton, "New Light on Israelite Religion: The Implications of the Inscriptions from Kuntillet ʿAjrud," *ZAW* 94 (1982), 2-20; Hadley, *Asherah*, 124.

33 For example, see Hadley, *Asherah*, 124, 152-53.

34 Sugimoto, *Female Figurines with a Disk*.


a.


b.

Fig. 4: Female figurines with a disk

a. Sugimoto, *Female Figurines with a Disk,* fig. N7; b. *Ibid.*, fig. PP4.

Iron Age, and only a few examples of the JPFs with a disk appeared after the 8th century BCE.

The writer interpreted this phenomenon as reflecting the situation that Yahweh first absorbed the idea of "victory in war" from the goddess Astarte and then completely differentiated himself from her.[35] After the 12th century

[35] I owe these concepts to Mark S. Smith (*Early History*), although he uses the term "convergence" for the first concept. Smith suggests that "convergence" was caused by the national ideology of the Davidic kingdom, but the writer holds the view that this change can already be observed archaeologically during Iron Age I, as the nature of religious artifacts started to change beginning in Iron Age I (Sugimoto, *Female Figurines with a Disk*; *ibid.*, "Religious Archaeological Artifacts from Israel and the Formations of Monotheism," in H. Ichikawa et al. [eds.], *What is History of Religion?,* Vol. 1 [Tokyo: Lithon, 2009, 229-266, Japanese]). It is indeed possible that the establishment of the United Kingdom required such an ideology for the consolidation of the kingdom and that it used Yahwistic monotheism for that purpose, but the idea itself can be traced to an earlier period.
In Old Testament studies, there is a trend of seeing the religion of Israel before the kingdom and during the earlier parts of the kingdom as monolatry, a religion that reveres a particular god but that does not negate the existence of other gods, in contrast to monotheism. However, the act of depriving other gods of their symbols and attributes may lead to a negation of their divinity, and such acts could not be carried out unless there was a

BCE, the concept of "victory," represented by the goddess Astarte until then, started to be expressed in the northern part of Israel by figurines in the form of a human woman who celebrated the victory with a hand-drum. Probably, such figurines were meant to make it easier for people with a polytheistic background to accept Yahwism and to show a monotheistic god who encompassed all the aspects of divine power. After the 9th century BCE, however, a strong Astarte cult in Phoenicia existed as an independent goddess was introduced to Israel, and the transcendent nature of Yahweh came to be no longer sufficiently shown by a "re-reading" of previous cult elements. Thus, the policy for monotheistic Yahwism was altered to exclude all the polytheistic elements.[36] In Phoenicia and Edom, the Astarte cult grew greatly, and the goddess started to absorb attributes from other goddesses. The female figurines with a disk from those areas also reflect such variety.

A similar phenomenon can also be observed in the "tree of life" iconography depicted on seals and pottery.[37] During the Middle and the Late Bronze

monotheistic idea. We are unaware to what extent the idea of exclusive monotheism was accepted by people in the beginning of the Iron Age, but at least a fair number of people held the idea of inclusive monotheism, which reinterpreted symbols and attributes of other gods and adapted them to Yahweh. Archaeological artifacts from Iron Age I to IIA, which retain some of the attributes of the Canaanite gods, yet use them in different ways from their equivalents during the Middle and the Late Bronze Age must reflect such a view. They lack the signs of divinities.

There was likely another group of people who adhered to a different kind of "inclusive monotheism," who believed that the other gods were ultimately different manifestations of their own god. Even though both positions are called "inclusive monotheism," the former position does not accept the existence of other gods and is basically monotheistic, while the latter admit the names of other gods and in that sense is polytheistic. The two perspectives must be clearly distinguished. There must have been people who took a monolatrous position, i.e., while they believed in Yahweh, they admitted that there were other gods for other people. Furthermore, there were probably people who had maintained a polytheistic religious view since the Canaanite period, and those who were attracted to new foreign religions such as the one from Phoenicia.

This was a society in which different positions coexisted, and the society as a whole was not monolatrous. It is one thing to concede that various religious views exist, but it is entirely other thing to agree with or to accept other perspectives. Although the monotheistic idea may not have been overwhelming in this society, it is still easier to understand the change in religious artifacts, if we assume that the monotheistic idea already existed among different viewpoints.

36 In the Hebrew Bible, Astarte is referred to as "the goddess of the Sidonians" (I Kgs 11:5, 33). King Solomon first introduced the Astarte cult to Israel (I Kgs 11:1-8), but it was King Ahab who introduced it as a national religion and confronted with prophets (I Kgs 16:33; 18:19. We interpret *asherah* in these passages as a symbol of Astarte, as discussed above).

37 See D. T. Sugimoto, "An Analysis of a Stamp Seal with Complex Religious Motifs Excavated at Tel ʿEn Gev, Israel," *IEJ* 64 (2014), 9-21; *ibid.*, "'Tree of Life'" (cf. n. 16). The same phenomenon can also be seen in the disappearance of gold and silver pendants (cf. P. E. McGovern, *Late Bronze Age Palestinian Pendants: Innovation in a Cosmopolitan Age* [Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1985]) and bronze figurines of gods (cf. O. Negbi, *Canaanite Gods in Metal: An Archaeological Study of Ancient Syro-Palestinian Figurine* [Tel Aviv:

Age, a naked woman or a "tree of life" was often engraved between ibexes as an expression of a fertility goddess on the seals, but after Iron Age I, the female figure completely disappeared.[38] During Iron Age IIA, the "tree of life" also faded away, and only ibexes are left. At the end of this period, quadrupeds with a suckling young came to be depicted as an independent figure and their species was blurred. There are just a few examples of the "tree of life" on the Iron Age IIB-C seals; however, they are not related to a goddess but rather to a male god (Fig. 5).[39] This phenomenon can also be understood to parallel the situation in which the concept of fertility was abstracted and absorbed into Yahweh's attributes.

Similarly, the "tree of life" was commonly painted on Late Bronze Age pottery (cf. Fig. 3c, d), but during the Iron Age, red-washed pottery became predominant, and the symbol of the tree disappeared almost completely.[40] There are a few examples of "tree of life" decorations on Iron Age pottery, but the present writer has shown that they were no longer related to a fertility goddess but instead re-read as a symbol of the blessings of Yahweh.[41]

Keel summarizes the phenomenon in the following remarks:

> "It is quite interesting to observe that during Iron Age I as well as in Iron Age IIA the relation of the tree to the anthropomorphic goddess became less explicit. The development has to be seen as part of a general tendency away from anthropomorphic representations of gods and goddesses. This is not to say that these deities vanished nor did it exclude a comeback of the anthropomorphic goddess in the eighth and seventh centuries, but it prepared the way for an association of the sacred tree symbol to Yahweh and similar divinities like Kemosh and Milkom as manifestation of their blessings."[42]

2.5. Summary

It is, therefore, clear that the JPFs cannot be directly connected with the Canaanite fertility goddess Asherah. The form and the date of the JPFs evidently suggest that they are not the direct continuation of Middle and Late Bronze Age female figurines or pendants. It cannot be established by biblical and the inscriptional evidences that goddess Asherah was widely worshiped in the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. Various archaeological artifacts reveal that the concepts of Canaanite religion largely changed in the beginning of

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Institute of Archaeology, 1976]) during Iron Age I.

38 M. Shuval, "A Catalogue of Early Iron Age Stamp Seals from Israel," in O. Keel, M. Shuval, and Ch. Uehlinger, *Studien zu den Stempelsiegeln aus Palästina/Israel III* (OBO 100; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag & Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990), 67-161.

39 See Keel, *Goddesses and Trees*, 42-46; figs. 79-96.

40 Cf. G. D. Choi, "Decoding Canaanite Pottery Paintings from the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age I," (Ph.D. thesis: The Hebrew University of Jerusalem), 2008.

41 Cf. Sugimoto, "'Tree of Life'."

42 Keel, *Goddesses and Trees*, 42.

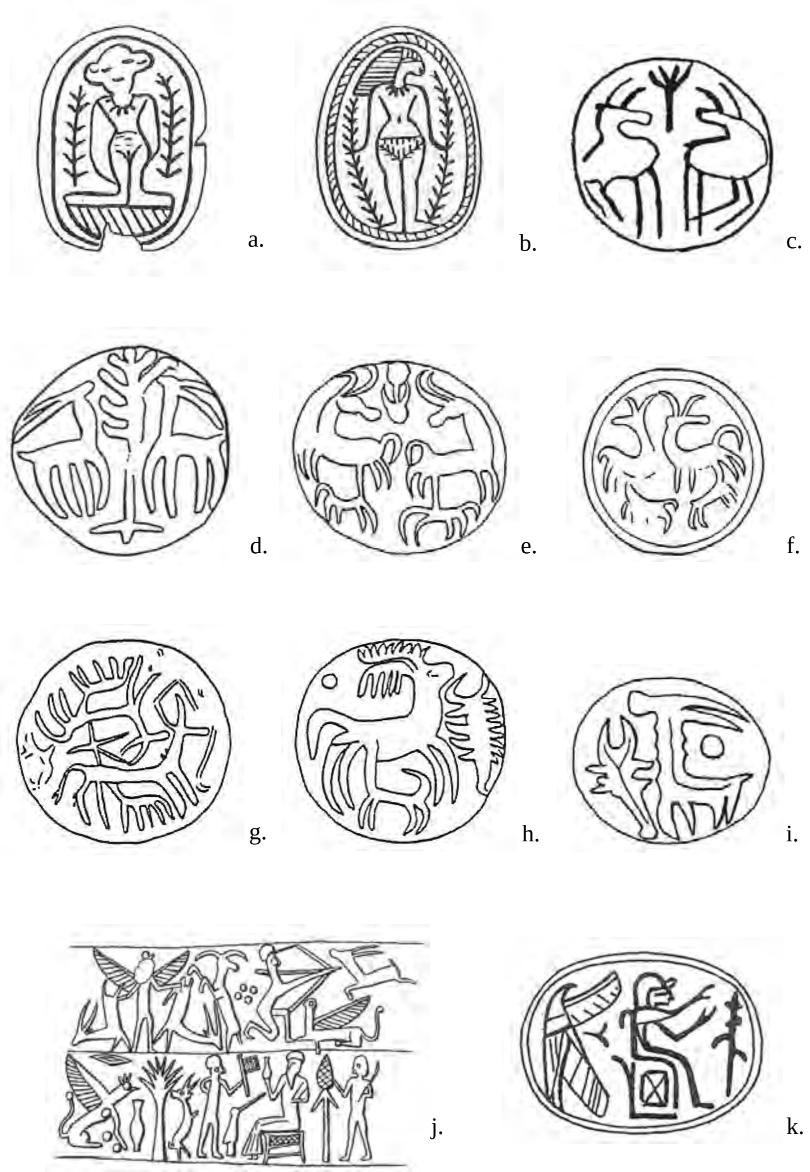


Fig. 5: Seals from the Middle Bronze Age to Iron Age IIC

a. Keel, *Goddesses and Trees*, fig. 26 (Gezer, MB); b. *Ibid*., fig. 22 (Lachish, MB); c. *Ibid.*, fig. 66 (Taanach, Iron I); d. *Ibid.*, fig. 67 (provenance unknown, Iron I); e. Shuval, fig. 92 (Dor, Iron Age I); f. Shuval, 95 (provenance unknown, Iron IIA); g. Shuval, fig. 93 (Gezer, Iron IIA); h. Keel and Uehlinger, fig. 175a (Megiddo, Iron IIA); i. Keel and Uehlinger, fig. 176c (Beth-Shemesh, Iron IIA); j. Keel, *Goddesses and Trees*, fig. 90 (Beth Shean, Iron IIB?); k. *Ibid.*, fig. 93 (Kition, Cyprus, Iron IIC).

the Israelite period,[43] and it is most reasonable to understand the nature of A/asherah along the same line.

3. JPFs and the "Queen of Heaven"

Next, we will discuss the possibility of relationship between JPFs and the cult of the "Queen of Heaven."

3.1. JPFs and the nature of the "Queen of Heaven"

The "Queen of Heaven" suddenly appears in Jeremiah 7:16-20; 44:15-19, 25 in the Hebrew Bible and is severely criticized; she is usually identified with Astarte, Ishtar, who was introduced anew in this period, or with a combination of the two.[44] Jeremiah is a prophet who emerged just before the Babylonian captivity, and the "Queen of Heaven" never emerges in the descriptions of pagan worship in the Hebrew Bible before his appearance. This perfectly matches the fact that the JPFs suddenly appeared in 8th and 7th century Judah, probably after the destruction of the northern kingdom. If it is improbable that the JPFs are related to Asherah, as discussed above, it is quite natural to consider the possibility that they are, rather, related to the "Queen of Heaven."[45]

T. Ornan has already shown that seals with the figure of Ishtar started to appear from 8th century Judah, and that Ishtar was introduced to the kingdom of Judah at that time.[46] In Mesopotamia, Ishtar was commonly depicted as a female figure with a horned polos on her head, and stars either around her body or on her head, standing on a lion and holding a weapon in her

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[43] The present writer interprets this phenomenon as reflecting that symbols and attributes of Canaanite gods were reinterpreted and absorbed by Yahweh.

[44] See S. Ackerman, "'And the Women Knead Dough': The Worship of the Queen of Heaven in Sixth Century Judah," in P. L. Day (ed.), *Gender and Difference in Ancient Israel*, (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 109-202; S. M. Olyan, "Some Observation Concerning the Identity of the Queen of Heaven," *UF* 19 (1987), 161-74; M. Weinfeld, "The Worship of Molech and the Queen of Heaven," *UF* 4 (1972), 133-54; G. Keown, et al. *Jeremiah 26-52* (WBC; Dallas, TX: Word 1995), 266-268. Ishtar was called *šarrat šamê* in Akkadian and *nbt pt* in Egyptian, i.e., the "Queen of Heaven."

[45] Based on the passage "But ever since we stopped burning incense to the Queen of Heaven and pouring out drink offerings to her, we have had nothing and have been perishing by sword and famine" (Jer 44:18), it is sometimes argued that the "Queen of Heaven" is a traditional goddess. However, if Ishtar is understood in relation to Astarte, she was not totally unknown to the people of Judah, and if the "Queen of Heaven" was already introduced in the eighth century BCE (at the time of the collapse of the northern kingdom?), she should have been already established by the time of Jeremiah.

[46] T. Ornan, "Ištar as Depicted on Finds from Israel." in A. Mazar (ed.), *Studies in the Archaeology of the Iron Age in Israel and Jordan* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 235-256.

hand.[47] She often wears a thick coat and many accessories such as necklaces and a headband. Astarte in the Middle-Late Bronze Age southern Levant is typically portrayed as a young woman wearing a crown and riding on a horse holding a weapon.[48] The seals introduced in 8th century BCE Judah have a Mesopotamian Ishtar figure.

On the other hand, the JPFs do not have a polos, stars, or a lion, and they represent a woman who exposes her large breasts, as though to suggest nursing or blessings. They do not fit the Mesopotamian-style Ishtar, but it has already been pointed out that during the first millennium, anthropomorphic representations of gods recede and that a serving human or animal is depicted instead in the southern Levant (cf. Keel and Uehlinger 1998 ch. VI); therefore, the disappearance of a polos or a lion was not a problem. It is also known that in Phoenicia, Astarte absorbed attributes of various goddesses and became a national goddess. That she also possessed a fertility nature is known from the fact that she is sometimes called "mother" (*ʾm*) (KAI 14:14; cf. KAI 83:1).[49] Probably, Astarte absorbed the fertility aspect of Asherah,[50] but the conflated goddess is known as Astarte, not Asherah. Iconographically the Phoenician Astarte is often represented by a figure of a pregnant woman or a nursing mother (Fig. 6),[51] and this is not contradictory with the JPF.

3.2. JPFs with a disk and the "Queen of Heaven"

There are examples of the JPF that hold a disk, although they are few in number. They seem to be a conflated form of a "female figurine with a disk" and a JPF; the fact that such conflation was possible suggests that these two types represented something identifiable. The present writer has already

[47] Cf. U. Seidl, "Inanna/Ištar (Mesopotamien), B. In der Bildkunst," in *Reallexikon der Assyriologie* 5, 1976-80, 87-89.

[48] Cf. I. Cornelius, *Many Faces of Goddess: The Iconography of the Syro-Palestinian Goddess Anat, Astarte, Qedeshet, and Asherah c. 1500-1000 BCE* (OBO 204; Fribourg: Academic Press & Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004). However, see also his article in this volume. We cannot exclude the possibility that there may have been other representations for her.

[49] Astarte also absorbed the title *rbt*, which was originally for Asherah (KAI 14: 15; 17: 1; 33:3). The fertility nature of Ishtar, on the other hand, is discussed (see Matsushima's article in this volume), although she is a lover of a fertility god, Dumuzi, and there was a rite of sacred marriage.

[50] Mark S. Smith (*Early History*, 128-129) points out the possibility that Asherah was absorbed by Astarte. During the Hellenistic period, Atargatis, a goddess, in whom various aspects of Astarte, Anat, Asherah, and others were probably fused, was known; she may reflect the same tendency to fuse various attributes and symbolism of goddesses into a particular goddess.

[51] For example, see clay figurines unearthed from Astarte temples in Kition and Sarepta (V. Karageorghis, *Kition: Mycenean and Phoenician Discoveries in Cyprus* [London: Thames & Hudson, 1976], 113; figs. 98, 104; and J. B. Pritchard, *Recovering Sarepta: A Phoenician City* [Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978], fig. 140) and a bronze figure with an inscription of "Astarte" from El Carambolo, Spain (cf. Bloch-Smith, fig. 20 in this volume).


a.


b.

Fig. 6: Clay figurines from Phoenician Astarte temples

a. Sarepta (Pritchard, *Recovering Sarepta*, fig. 140); b. Kition (Karageorghis, fig. 98).

shown that "female figurines with a disk" represented either Astarte (in Phoenicia and related areas) or the concept of "victory" that she originally ruled (in Israel).[52] If this view is correct, the JPFs have to be seen as reflecting faith along the same lines, i.e., Astarte or "victory."

3.3. Hermaphrodite or male JPFs and the "Queen of Heaven"

There are also hermaphrodite or male examples among the JPFs,[53] and we would like to argue that they are related to the "Queen of Heaven." Figure 7 is a JPF in the collection of the MCC Museum of Biblical Archaeology in Tokyo,[54] and beard is clearly noticed on his/her face. He/she also wears something similar to a Phrygian hat. The JPF is usually considered as a female figure because of the large breasts, but this example has to be understood as a hermaphrodite or

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52 Sugimoto, *Female Figurines with a Disk*, 78-82, 111-112.

53 The following examples should be seen as variations of JPFs, because their manufacturing methods are same. The body is made into a pillar shape by hand, the face is pinched, and the entire figure is white-washed. In this period, almost no other types of human figurine appear in Judah, and this makes it more probable that they belong to the same type.

54 It was acquired in a Jerusalem antiquity market (height of 14.8 cm; width of a disk 4.5 cm; width of the body 2.3-3.0 cm). The entire body is white-washed, and horizontal bands are painted on the lower body.





Fig. 7: Judean Pillar Figurine with a beard and a disk at MCC Museum of the Biblical Archaeology

Photograph by the author.

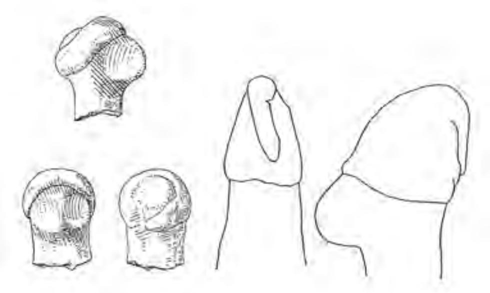


Fig. 8: Heads of Judean Pillar Figurines with a turban and a hat

Kletter, *Judean Pillar Figurines*, figs. 5-3, 6.



Fig. 9: Judean Pillar Figurine with a beard from Ramat Rahel

Aharoni, *Ramat Rahel*, fig. 35-3.

a male.[55] Because this example has a disk, it could be considered an exception, but there are other heads with a turban (for example, Holland, Fig. 3: 1-9; Kletter's types A.2 [heads with "turban"], and A.3 [heads with "turban and locks"]) or a Phrygian hat (Holland, figs. 3: 10-13; 13: 5; Kletter's type A.4 [heads with "hats"]; our Fig. 8) among the JPFs. Turbans and Phrygian hats are usually worn by men. A JPF unearthed from Ramat Rahel (Fig. 9)[56] not only wears a Phrygian hat but also has a prominent beard. This figure does not have a disk nor breasts, and it has to be regarded as a hermaphrodite or a male.[57]

Hermaphrodite figurines were not uncommon in the neighboring areas of Judah (Fig. 10). For example, a disk-holding figurine from Tel ʿIra, in Edom, just south of Judah, clearly has breasts, a beard, and a penis.[58] A figurine from ʿEin Jenin near Buseirah in Transjordan has both a beard and breasts.[59] Another figurine from Amman (Tomb C) in Transjordan, does not carry a disk, but has a swollen belly and breasts in addition to a mustache and beard painted in black.[60] Homès-Fredericq suggests that the latter two are related to a combined god such as Astar-Kemosh known from Mesha inscriptions.[61]

The possibility of the hermaphrodite nature of Ishtar has been pointed out.[62] Heimpel argued that although the Ishtar worshiped among the Semitic people as a morning star was originally male, he became female, because he met a Sumerian goddess, Inanna, who represented an evening star, and became associated with her.[63] This process may be reflected in the fact that Athtar in Ebla texts is male, and that in Ugarit, Ishtar was not identified with Astarte but rather Athtar, a god in her male form. Heimpel, however, suggested that they never merged completely, and that "Ishtar of Uruk" represented a hierodule as a goddess and that "Ishtar of Babylon" was a god with a beard.[64]

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55 The face of a similar figurine with a large disk from Ramat Rahel (Y. Aharoni, *Excavations at Ramat Rahel 1: Seasons 1959 and 1960* [Roma: Università degli Studi di Roma 1962], fig. 5) is broken, and hence, it is unknown whether it had a beard.

56 Y. Aharoni, *Excavations at Ramat Rahel: Seasons 1961 and 1962* (Roma: Università degli Studi di Roma, 1964), fig. 35-3.

57 Kletter (*Judean Pillar Figurines*) lists four examples in "Male figurines with hand-made (type A) heads" of "Other Related Figures (Mainly from Judah)" in his app. 5. II. 3.

58 P. Beck, "Human Figurine with Tambourine" in I. Beit-Arieh, *Tel 'Ira: A Stronghold in the Biblical Negev* (Tel Aviv: Sonia and Marco Nadler Institute of Archaeology, 1999), 386-394.

59 D. Homès-Fredericq, "Possible Phoenician Influence in Jordan in the Iron Age," *SHAJ* 3, 1987, fig. 3.

60 G. L. Harding, "Two Iron Age Tombs in Amman," *ADAJ* 1 (1951), 37; pl. 14; Beck, "Tambourine," fig. 7.7: 9.

61 Homès-Fredericq, "Possible Phoenician Influence," 89-96.

62 The name Ishtar is a masculine noun, although she is a goddess; this in itself probably requires some explanation.

63 W. Heimpel, "A Catalog of Near Eastern Venus Deities," *Syro-Mesopotamian Studies* 4 (1982), 9-22.

64 In Mari, a "male Ishtar" existed together with the usual (female) Ishtar (Heimpel, *Venus Deities*, 14; B. Groneberg, "Die sumerisch-akkadische Inanna/Ištar: Hermaphroditos?" *Die Welt des Orients* 17 [1986], 42).



a.



b.



c.

Fig. 10: Hermaphrodite figurines from Edom and Transjordan
a. A figurine from Tel ʿIra: Beck, fig. 7.5; b. A figurine from ʿEin Jenin: Beck, fig. 7.11; c. A figurine from Amman: photography by the author.

Groneberg accepted Heimpel's historical reconstruction, but pointed out the possibility that the god and goddess were united and actually became hermaphrodites.[65] For example, in the text of Iddin-Dagan's sacred marriage, a manifestation of Ishtar is depicted with shiny attraction of her feminine nature and as a masculine "hero."[66] Ishtar's Hymn of Ashurbanipal records that a female Ishtar has beard,[67] and she is often said to "turn a man into a woman and a woman into a man."[68] The gender of *kurugarru*, priests who served Ishtar, is also described ambiguously, and it is reported that they had sexual intercourse with men and that there was a ritual in which they wore women's clothes;[69] this again suggests the dual character of Ishtar. In the *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* (vol. M/2, 306), the expression "Though I am a woman, I am a noble young man" is listed. Ishtar not only changed his/her sex but he/she could also travel between this world and the underworld; Rivkah Harris thus argued that he/she was a being who broke down binary oppositions.[70]

Concerning the nature of Astarte in the Levant, it is interesting that a male Athtar appeared in Ugaritic literature beside a female Astarte.[71] In the Baal Cycle, he was originally a god of war, but his power did not exceed that of Baal; it is suggested that this myth probably reflects the historical reality that Baal took over Athtar's position as a war-god. Athtar is also widely found among inscriptions in the Arabian desert, and he was probably the most important god in that region. He was a god of war, irrigation, and fertility.[72] There is no evidence that he was a hermaphrodite, but it is noteworthy that a god whose name was the masculine form of Astarte was popular in this area, and ruled war and fertility.

There are also some archaeological artifacts that depict Astarte as a hermaphrodite. Among the bronze figures from Luristan are examples that

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65 B. Groneberg, "Hermaphroditos?," 25-46.

66 Cf. D. D. Reisman, "Iddin-Dagan's Sacred Marriage Hymn," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 25 (1973), 45-64. Particularly ll. 5, 7 for the former aspect, l. 18 for the latter aspect.

67 J. A. Craig, *Assyrian and Babylonian Religious Texts I/II* (Assyriologische Bibliothek 13; Leipzig, 1895/1897), 1, 7.

68 E.g., Erra IV ll. 55-56; in-nin šà-gur$_4$-ra (A. W. Sjöberg, "in-nin šà-gur-ra: A Hymn to the Goddess Inanna," *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 65-2 [1976], 161-253) ll. 119-120; ASKT no.21 rev. 43-53.

69 Groneberg, 33-39; R. Harris, "Inanna-Ishtar as Paradox and a Coincidence of Opposites," *History of Religions* 30 (1991), 276-277; cf. Iddin Dagan, ll. 45-64.

70 Harris,"Inanna-Ishtar," 277.

71 Athtar, however, never appears with Astarte as part of a pair.

72 Cf. J. Gray, "The Desert God ʿAṯtar in the Literature and Religion of Canaan," *JNES* 8 (1949), 72-83; Mark S. Smith, "The God Athtar in the Ancient Near East and His Place in KTU 1.6 I." in Z. Zevit, S. Gitin, and M. Sokoloff (eds.), *Solving Riddles and Untying Knots: Biblical, Epigraphic, and Semitic Studies in Honor of Jonas C. Greenfield* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1995), 628-629.

clearly show female breasts and a beard (Fig. 11-a).[73] The expression of the Astarte in Phoenician area also demonstrates his/her hermaphroditic nature. For example, a metal bowl with a delicate repoussé work from Cyprus (Fig. 11-b)[74] has a large star in the center, and its theme is clearly Astarte. On this plate, two pairs of a god and a goddess in similar posture are depicted looking in opposite directions. They appear more like an expression of two opposite aspects of a god than as consorts.[75] Stone-carved human heads from Amman Castle, Jordan (Fig. 11-c),[76] have faces on both the front and the reverse sides, and the dual nature of one person is expressed. Because the face appears similar to that of a "woman in the window," one of the themes common in Phoenician ivory, Homès-Fredericq identified them as a priestess of Astarte. The fact that numbers of hermaphrodite figurines have been unearthed from the Transjordan and Edom areas may also support that the Athtar cult was popular in these areas. It is, thus, quite reasonable to see the influence of the same religious trend in hermaphrodite or male JPFs.

3.4. Summary

Ishtar and Astarte, therefore, probably had a hermaphrodite nature. Even if this cannot be proven, we cannot deny that a duality or a close relationship between male and female natures was often seen in her/him. If the JPFs sometimes appear in hermaphrodite or male form, it is highly probable that they represent Ishtar or Astarte, who was newly introduced to Judah as the "Queen of Heaven" during this period. Almost no other goddess except for Ishtar, Astarte, and the "Queen of Heaven" can reflect such duality. The JPFs suddenly appeared and became popular in the 8th century BCE and continued to the Babylonian captivity; this time frame perfectly matches the biblical description of the "Queen of Heaven." That there are JPFs with a disk again shows their relationship with Astarte.

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73 H. Potratz, "Das 'Kampfmotiv' in der Luristankunst Dasrstellungen einer Mondgöttin in Luristan," *OrNS* 21 (1952), 13-36, fig. 66. Besides this example, breasts and a beard are seen in figs. 8, 25, and 69 of Potratz' article. Although Groneberg (pp. 29-30) rejects these attributes as a technical problem of metallurgy, it is difficult to explain all of them in that way; they appear intentional. There are figures in the same posture, either with a beard or with breasts; this may suggest that the same god can be sometimes seen as male and other times as female.

74 G. Markoe, *Phoenician Bronze and Silver Bowls from Cyprus and the Mediterranean* (University of California Publications, Classical Studies 26; Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California, 1985), fig. Cy3.

75 The cylinder seal from Bethel discussed in Cornelius' article in this volume (see his fig. 2) may similarly be interpreted as representing the dual aspects of Astarte.

76 Homès-Fredericq, fig. 5.



a.



b.



c.

Fig. 11: Hermaphrodite depiction of Ishtar and Astarte

a. A bronze stand from Luristan: Potratz, “Kampfmotiv,” fig. 66; b. A metal bowl from Cyprus: Markoe, “Bowls from Cyprus,” fig. Cy3; c. Two-faced stone sculpture from Amman Castle: photograph by the author (cf. R. H. Dornemann, *The Archaeology of the Transjordan in the Bronze and Iron Ages* [Milwaukee, WI: Milwaukee Public Museum, 1983], Fig. 94).

4. Conclusions

From the above discussion, it is unlikely that the JPFs represent Asherah, a Canaanite fertility goddess, but rather that they are probably to be understood in connection with the cult of Astarte or Ishtar as the "Queen of Heaven" introduced into Judah after the 8th century BCE. Very few female figurines have been unearthed from the first half of the Iron Age in Judah, and the strong influence of the Canaanite cult cannot be traced. However, after the destruction of the northern kingdom, a new religious atmosphere was created, probably under the strong influence of neighboring countries, such as Assyria, Phoenicia, Ammon, Moab, and Edom. The prophet Jeremiah should be understood as standing against this trend, and probably the religious reform of King Josiah as well. On the other hand, it is difficult to use the JPFs as evidence for the direct continuity of Canaanite polytheism in Judah and to see that Jeremiah's prophecy and Josiah's reform were directed against them.

Archaeological and Inscriptional Evidence for Phoenician Astarte

Elizabeth BLOCH-SMITH

Beginning in the Iron Age, Astarte gains prominence as the patron goddess of the Phoenician kingdoms. From the 10th through the 2nd century BCE as the Tyrians and Sidonians traverse the Mediterranean to establish colonies and emporia, Astarte worship spreads to Cyprus and later to regions as distant as Malta and Italy (Map 1, 2).

Studies of Astarte suffer from a lack of methodological rigor. Iron Age and Persian period images of naked women and virtually all Levantine female figurines are considered Astarte, and any inscription to the goddess presumes a dedicated temple or shrine in the vicinity. Accordingly, only objects explicitly inscribed in Phoenician to Astarte will be considered with their proximate "cultic" context. This too has its limitations; the vagaries of excavation yield selective inscribed objects that may not accurately represent ancient practices. We construct hypotheses based on the available evidence, so this survey begins with the five inscriptions in their cultic contexts, presented chronologically, followed by Phoenician epigraphic references to Astarte temples and two dedicated objects.

Worship and sacrifice sites range from an open-air court (Kition-*Bamboula*), to a modest shrine (Sarepta, Mitzpe Yamim), to a construction within the temple of another deity (Pyrgi, Umm el-Amed), to an elaborate, temple complex (Kition-*Kathari*, Paphos, Tas Silġ). No standardized terminology exists for religious structures. In this paper, a "temple," an elaborate, formal building for worship, represents a considerable investment intended to convey the power and authority of both the deity and the sponsoring institution (king or city). "Shrine" refers to a simple structure to accommodate worshippers, and an "open-air" cult site to a temenos or demarcated space with or without constructed rooms for worship. Only four or five structures in coastal Phoenicia, northern Israel, Cyprus, and Malta are considered a temple or shrine where Astarte was worshipped based on the confluence of inscriptions explicitly naming the goddess and various features deemed "cultic." Characteristic Phoenician cultic features include 1) a rectangular structure oriented east-west; 2) a location within view of the sea; 3) a demarcated cella or focus of worship; 4) a constructed altar or offering table; 5) benches along the walls; 6) a standing stone/betyl or another divine representation; and 7) animal sac-



Map 1: Phoenician mainland sites where Astarte is attested by name (based on Markoe, *Phoenicians* [London: British Museum Press, 2000]).



Map 2: Phoenician overseas sites where Astarte is attested by name.

rifice or other votive gifts. While the sacred sites share combinations of these features, each is distinctive.

1. Excavated Temples

1.1. Kition (eastern Cyprus)

Phoenicians colonize the bay of Kition on Cyprus beginning in the second half of the 9th century BCE, by the reign of Hiram I.[1] Astarte was likely worshipped in a temple complex in the northern part of the city (*Kathari*) and perhaps at an open-air shrine further south (*Bamboula*).

Kition – Kathari:
Attribution of the *Kition–Kathari* temple to Astarte is based on numerous female figurines in the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age II temples in conjunction with an inscribed, red-slip bowl dedicated to the goddess, and dated by epigraphy and stratigraphy to the late 9th or 8th century BCE.[2] The inscription reads,

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1 Josephus recording Menander states that Hiram "undertook a campaign against the Itykaians, who had not paid their tribute, and when he had again made them subject to him, returned home" (*Antiquities* VIII, 146 = *Contra Apionem* I, 119; quoted on p. 84 in H. Katzenstein, *The History of Tyre: From the Beginning of the Second Millennium B.C.E. until the Fall of the Neo-Babylonian Empire in 538 B.C.E.* [Jerusalem: Schocken Institute for Jewish Research, 1973]). If referring to Kition, then Tyrian control of the city pre-dates Hiram I's suppression of this rebellion in the 10th century BCE, probably under king Ithobaal.

2 Karageorghis dates the bowl to the end of the 9th century BCE on both paleographic and stratigraphic grounds (V. Karageorghis, *View from the Bronze Age: Mycenaean and Phoenician Discoveries at Kition* [New York: Dutton & Co., 1976], 106). Yon prefers 800 (M. Yon, *Kition-Bamboula V: Kition dans les texts* [Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les civilizations, 2004], 188) and Amadasi-Guzzo the 8th century BCE (M. Guzzo-Amadasi,

> (1) In memorial. ML had his hair (herein) shaved and prayed to Lady Astarte and Astarte listened to his prayer. (2) And were offered (as sacrifice): on the part of ML, a sheep and a lamb, together (3) with his hair; on the part of the family of ML, a lamb. This vase (4) ML filled with his hair (herein)…seven in number, because of the prayer made in Tamassos.[3]

Second century CE (Pseudo-) Lucian describes cultic practices in *De Dea Syria*, 60, "When a man goes as a worshipper for the first time to Hierapolis [in Syria], he cuts his hair, then he sacrifices a lamb, he kneels down and puts the animal's head and feet on his own head, and prays to the gods to accept his sacrifice."[4] Our bowl held the hair offered in conjunction with animal sacrifices. On the Kition temple floor near the offering table lay 15 skulls of young bulls and a cow, cleaned from the back for use as masks, as described by Lucian. Similar cleaned masks come from Cypriot Enkomi's 12th century BCE temple of the "Horned God" near the altar and the 11th century BCE temple of the "Ingot God."[5] While horned crowns are generally worn by male deities, Philo of Byblos describes Astarte donning a bull's head (*Fragments*, 31-2), "Greatest Astarte and Zeus,…were ruling over the land with the consent of Kronos. Astarte placed upon her own head a bull's head as an emblem of kingship".[6]

The practice is attested by 7th–6th century BCE (Archaic period) terracotta models of humans donning bull masks from the Cypriot coastal sites of Kourion and Aya Irini[7] (Fig 1). According to the ancient sources, both supplicants (Lucian) and individuals representing regnant Astarte (Philo of Byblos) wore animal masks.

Excavations at Kition, Vol. 3: Inscriptions phéniciennes [Nicosia: Department of Antiquities, 1977], D21).

3 This translation by A. Dupont-Sommer (*Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 44 (1970), 1-24, quoted in Karageorghis, *View from the Bronze Age*, 106). Robert Coote offers an alternate translation not generally accepted: (1) Incantation. Poke the dog so that it slumps [before As]tarte, and p[oke(?)… (2) When it comes, poke it and let it come (again). Incantation. And the [dog(?) is slum]ped… (3) Poke the decrepit one! Incantation. Recite… (4) Incantation. Poke the sl[umped one(?)]! (7 or 8 short vertical strokes) When <it? rises let it come. Incantation. Po[ke… (5)… (6) Incanta[tion… (R. Coote, "The Kition Bowl," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 220 [1975], 47-50).

4 V. Karageorghis, "Notes on Some Cypriote Priests Wearing Bull-Masks," *Harvard Theological Review* 64 (1971), 263.

5 Karageorghis, *View from the Bronze Age*, 102-3.

6 H. Attridge and R. Oden Jr., *Philo of Byblos: The Phoenician History. Introduction, Critical Text, Translation, Notes* (Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph 9; Washington D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1981), 55. The quote continues, "While traveling around the world, she discovered a star which had fallen from the sky. She took it up and consecrated it in Tyre, the holy island. The Phoenicians say that Astarte is Aphrodite." Philo of Byblos' association of Astarte with the stars may be related to her importance to the sea-faring Phoenicians.

7 Karageorghis, "Bull-Masks," 262-63; 1976, 105.



Fig. 1: Kourion Temple of Apollo model of men (priests or worshippers) donning an ox head mask (Karageorghis, *View from the Bronze Age: Mycenaean and Phoenician Discoveries at Kition* [New York: Dutton & Co., 1976], fig. 82).

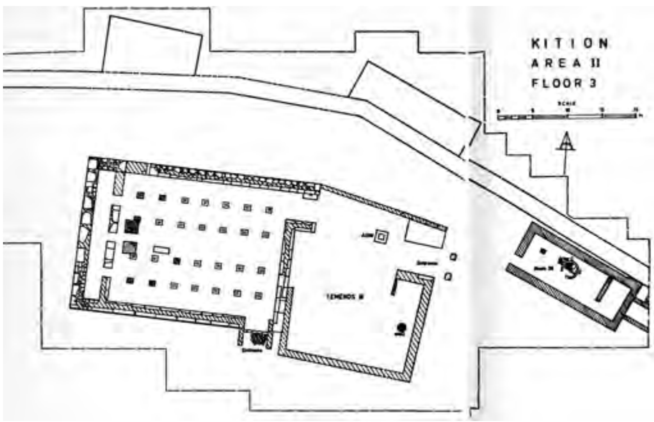


Fig. 2: Kition Temple I Floor 3 plan (Karageorghis, *View from the Bronze Age*).

The Kition Kathari Temple I Floor 3, dated by pottery in associated bothroi to the second half of the 9th century BCE and perhaps the 8th century BCE (ca. 850–800/725 BC), sits directly above a Late Bronze Age sacred complex (Fig. 2).[8] The focal point of this rectangular structure (31 m x 22 m), oriented

8 J. Smith revises the dates based on pottery types: Floor I Karageorghis ca. 1050–1000 BCE to Smith ca. 1000–850 BCE; Floor 3 Karageorghis ca. 850–725 BCE to Smith ca.

east—west, consists of an elevated "holy-of-holies" corridor directly above the LBA temple niche. Three entrances open into this corridor and two pillars constructed of fieldstones faced with small ashlars flank the central entrance. Approximately two meters in front of the southern flanking pillar lay a large gypsum slab (2.16 m x 0.86 m) with three perforations at the edges, called an "offering table." Both the pillars and offering table stand in the 4.40 m wide, central, open-air, aisle. Flanking the central aisle, two rows of seven (wooden) columns support seven meter wide porticoes. Together, the temple and associated Temenos B cover 50 meters x 100 meters. Temenos B (23.60 m x 19.20 m) covers the earlier Temple 2 and Temenos B and retains the altar first constructed for Floor II (1125–1050 BCE). Graffiti of crudely drawn ships etched into the ashlars lining the exterior wall face, attributed to the sea-faring Phoenicians, may belong with this or the previous temple. The reconstruction of this and later temples relies on the depiction on much later, Roman coins of Paphos.[9]

Offerings retrieved from the temple and temenos bothroi (5, 10, 11) attest to animal sacrifice: large numbers of sheep and lamb bones (some carbonized), plus cattle, fallow deer, fish, and birds; an iron skewer and knife; and large storejars, local and Phoenician fine wares, and both large and miniature bowls and juglets.[10] Surprising amounts of bronze and lead fragments, lead pieces, and gold foil, from Bothroi 3, 4, 5, 11, and 12 and not elsewhere attested at the site, suggest the collection of scrap metal in the temple.[11]

This Kition temple is monumental, built of ashlars, with rows of columns, multiple entrances, and probable clerestory windows, and set within a sacred complex or sanctuary. Rather than a Levantine plan, the Phoenicians appear to have adopted the adaptable Egyptian hypostyle hall as their model. While comparable to Levantine temples with a square-rectangular plan, indirect access, and a cella along the far wall,[12] the differences, both in conception and detail far outweigh the similarities. For a comparable Egyptian structure, see the temple of Khonsu at Karnak.[13]

850–707 BCE; Floor 2A Karageorghis ca. 725-550 BCE to Smith ca. 707–550 BCE (J. Smith, *Art and Society in Cyprus from the Bronze Age into the Iron Age* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009], Table 4).

9 Karageorghis, *View from the Bronze Age*, 97-99, 107.

10 Karageorghis, *View from the Bronze Age*,101, 105, 108.

11 Smith, *Art and Society,* 209. A tuyère fragment and slag pieces between Floors 3 and 2A may indicate metallurgical activity, though not until Floor 2 is a furnace constructed in Temenos B, recalling the metallurgical workshops associated with the Temple through the earlier phases of Floors III-I (Smith, *Art and Society*, 68).

12 Wright finds the closest matches in Levantine temples from Lachish (Fosse Temple), Tell Qasile, Ugarit, and Kamid el-Loz (G. R. H. Wright, *Ancient Building in Cyprus* [Leiden, New York, Köln: Brill, 1992], 266, 515).

13 A. Badawy, *A History of Egyptian Architecture: The Empire (the New Kingdom) From the Eighteenth Dynasty to the End of the Twentieth Dynasty 1580—1085 B.C.* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968), 176-81, fig. 135. Refai discusses the conception, plan, and function of hypostyle halls (Hosam Refai, "Notes on the Function of the Great Hypostyle Hall in the Egyptian Temple: A Theban Approach", pp. 393-97 in

Late Bronze Age Minoan-style female figurines with upraised arms found in association with Temple 1 Floor 3 are identified as Astarte**.** This figurine has a long history as the predominant image at the site though primarily in association with the smaller, proximate Temple 4.[14] Either this figurine represents an Aegean goddess identified with the Late Bronze Age local goddess, not Astarte, or by the late 9th c., Phoenicians worshipped Astarte in a foreign guise. It is noteworthy that neither the temple plan nor the representation of the goddess, if Astarte, conforms to Phoenician homeland prototypes or practices. Comparable to Tas Silġ and Paphos, a Phoenician temple appears to have been constructed on an earlier temple with continued worship of the local goddess who is identified by the Phoenicians with Astarte and by others with their own goddess.

We lack explicit evidence associating the subsequent temple with the worship of Astarte, Temple 1 Floor 2A, the immediate rebuilding following a severe fire (725/707–550 BCE). Two Levantine-style bronze figurines, found south of the temple courtyard, attest to the deity worshipped. Both males wear a kilt, the first with one arm lifted in the characteristic benedictory pose and the second with arms hanging at his sides.[15] Objects dedicated to Baal from Bothroi 9 and 6A suggest the identity of the figurines: an amphora labeled as the property of Baal, and a Phoenician ostracon mentioning Baal of Kition.[16] Either the patron deity changed or both god and goddess were worshipped in the temple as suggested by the *Bamboula* Temple Tarif Text, which is contemporary with Floor 2A or Floor 2.

Temple 1 Floor 2A follows the same general plan as Floor 3 but with interior modifications. The holy-of-holies entrance moves, the offering table shifts position, a new rectangular altar is erected near the entrance, and a second altar in the former Temenos A rises directly above a Late Bronze Age altar with horns of consecration.[17] In general, Aegean, Egyptian, Syrian, and Phoenician finds from the Temple floor and bothroi demonstrate increasing internationalism coupled with decreasing Cypriot influences.[18]

1.2. Kition-Bamboula (eastern Cyprus)

In contrast to the *Kathari* temple complex, Kition-*Bamboula* consists of an open, sacred area with altars for personal offerings (Fig. 3). Two 5th/4th century BCE inscriptions provide the earliest references to Astarte. The Kition Temple Tariff Text, found in 1879, records monthly expenses and payments

Zahi Hawass ed. *Egyptology at the Dawn of the Twenty-First Century: Proceedings of the Eighth International Congress of Egyptologists Cairo, 2000. Vol. 1. Archaeology* [Cairo, New York: American University in Cairo, 2003]), 393).

14 Smith, *Art and Society*, 134.

15 Karageorghis, *View from the Bronze Age*, pl. 89, XIX.

16 Karageorghis, *View from the Bronze Age*, pl. 89, XIX; Smith, *Art and Society*, 146.

17 Karageorghis, *View from the Bronze Age*, 108-09.

18 Karageorghis, *View from the Bronze Age*, 110-11; Smith, *Art and Society*, 146, 250.

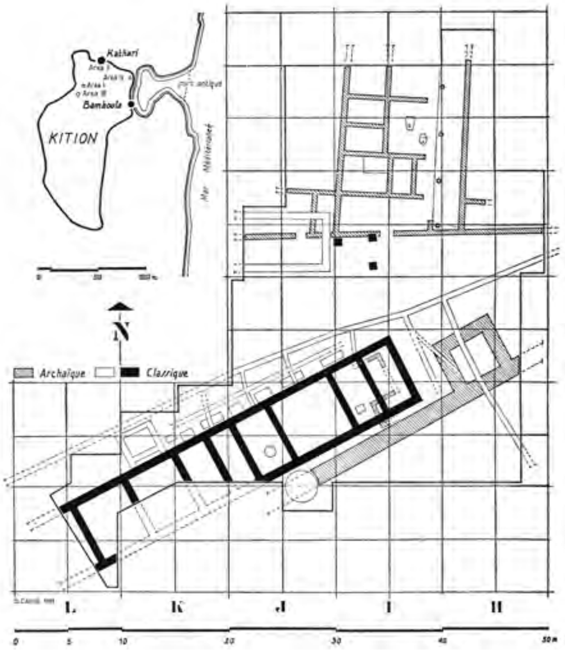


Fig. 3: Kition *Bamboula* sacred area plan (M. Yon, "Mission Archéologique Française de Kition-*Bamboula* 1976–1984," 219-25 in V. Karageorghis [ed.], *Archaeology in Cyprus 1960-1985* [Nicosia: A.G. Leventis Foundation, 1985], fig. 1).

providing a priceless list of temple functionaries and employees.[19] Among the employees are craftsmen working at temples to Astarte and to MKL: "To the 4 masons who repaired the temple of Astarte at Kition, 2 QR" (line 4) and "To the 20 craftsmen who made the pillars of stone in the temple of MKL [" (line 13) as well as leaders of the new-moon festival, janitors and men (stationed at the sanctuary) door, singers attending the Holy Queen, pages, sacrificers, bakers who bake the basket of cakes for the [Holy] Queen, pages, barbers, chief of the scribes, (dogs) and lions' whelps, master(s) of the days at the procession around the deity, temple personnel responsible for pillars of MKL,…shepherds who live in D-PLKD and Kition, and (temple) girls and 22 girls (employed) at the sacrifice (KAI 37).[20] The Astarte temple notation clearly refers to a temple, not an open-air sacred area.

[19] Karageorghis, *View from the Bronze Age*, 17, 107.

[20] J. Gibson, *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions. Vol. III: Phoenician Inscriptions* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002[2], 124-27. In a dedicatory inscription from Idalion dated by Gibson to 390 BCE, Resheph MKL in Idalion is the recipient of a golden mace "which King Milkyatan, king of Kition and Idalion, son of Baalrom, gave to his god Resheph

In a second *Bamboula* inscription dated to 325 BCE and now lost, a female dedicant offers a statue of a female to Astarte (CIS I, 11).[21] “Au jour 24 du mois de MRP’, de l’an 37 du roi Pumayyaton, roi de Kition et d’Idalion, fils du roi / Milyaton, roi de Kition et d’Idalion. Cette statue (de femme) (est celle) qu’a donnée et érigée en bronze Y’Š, femme de BʿLL / TYTN, à sa dame, a Astarté; puisse-t-elle écouter (sa) voix.”[22] If the statue depicted Astarte, it would complement the El Carambolo, Spain naked female figurine with an inscribed base dedicating the statue to Astarte (see below). From the 9th through the 5th century BCE, altars and pyres attest to the cultic practices in the area. Based on the two inscriptions, the excavators identify the numerous female figurines as Astarte – the Minoan female with upraised arms, a pregnant woman, a woman with a drum, and a Greek-style goddess.[23] Some will be argued to be votive figurines, while others may have represented Phoenician Astarte. The Phoenicians were eclectic and so may have adopted foreign images or they may have preferred Phoenician representations consonant with her Phoenician name.

From the 9th to the mid-7th century BCE, the area encompasses a line of rooms and a 2 m x 2 m stone altar and a base. The excavators, Yon and Caubet, identify Astarte as the goddess on the basis of a fragmentary figurine of the woman with upraised arms found in the destruction debris above this phase, metallurgical activity, and pottery from the Levant and western Cyprus.[24] During the mid-7th to mid-6th century BCE, the configuration changes but the area apparently retains its cultic character. From the street, one enters a walled precinct with two “chapels,” demarcated spaces, and a covered portico running the length of the eastern side of the area. A trough, platform, and basin for rituals involving water/liquids, but no altar, attest to cultic activity in what remains predominantly open space.[25] Beginning in the 5th century BCE, contemporary with the construction of the new harbor and a long rectangular building equipped with hydraulic installations for cultic activities,[26]

MKL in Idalion, in the month Bul in the 2nd year of his reign over Kition and Idalion, because he heard his voice. May he bless him!” (Gibson, *Phoenician Inscriptions*, 131-33).

21 A. Caubet, “Les sanctuaires de Kition à l’époque de la dynastie phénicienne,” 153-68, in C. Bonnet, E. Lipiński and P. Marchetti (eds.), *Studia Phoenicia IV. Religio Phoenicia* (Namur: Société des Études Classiques, 1986), particularly 155.

22 Yon, *Kition-Bamboula* V, 174.

23 Caubet, “Les sanctuaires de Kition,” 157-58.

24 M. Yon, “Mission Archéologique Française de Kition-*Bamboula* 1976–1984,” 219-25 in V. Karageorghis (ed.), *Archaeology in Cyprus 1960–1985* (Nicosia: A. G. Leventis Foundation, 1985), 224; A. Caubet, “Le sanctuaire chypro-archaïque de Kition-Bamboula: séminaire de recherche 1981–1982 sous la direction de G. Roux,” in *Temples et Sanctuaires*, Travaux de la Maison de l’Orient No.7 (Paris: GIS – Maison de l’Orient, 1984), 108-9, fig. 1; “Les sanctuaires de Kition,” 157; A. Caubet, Tel Aviv University presentation, Feb. 2011.

25 Caubet, “Les sanctuaires chypro-archaïques,” 109-113.

26 J.-F. Salles, *Les égouts de la ville classique: Kition-Bamboula II* (Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1983); M. Yon, “L’archéologie monumentale partim Orient” pp. 119-131 in V. Krings (ed.), *La civilisation phénicienne et punique: Manuel de*

most walls of our precinct are razed to re-establish a large open court with a succession of altars and pyres.[27]

Karageorghis and Yon disagree on the location of the temple to Astarte. Karageorghis regards the Temple Tarif Text as referring to his Temple 1 in *Kathari* while Yon situates the Astarte temple in *Bamboula*, where the text was found. Provenience, while not determinative, constitutes compelling evidence. Perhaps the *Kathari* monumental Temple 1 Floor 3 (ca. 850–800/725) served for formal worship of Astarte in the 9th–8th century BCE, while the *Bamboula* sacred area accommodated formal and informal offerings to Astarte, perhaps among others, in later centuries. In *Bamboula*, bothroi statues of Melqart/Heracles in a smiting pose with a raised weapon and of Zeus, dating from the late 6th to the end of the 4th century BCE, suggest a Persian period temple to a god (phases 5–8).[28] As in Kition-*Kathari*, we may have evidence for the worship of male and female deities, in this case in a temple and a proximate, open-air, sacred space.[29]

1.3. Sarepta (southern Lebanon)

At Sarepta (13 km south of Sidon), a small shrine situated in an industrial area overlooks the harbor. Inscriptions found nearby and in later levels dedicate votive objects or their contents to multiple deities: "Tanit-Ashtart" on a 7th century BCE ivory plaque (II-A-4, level 3), "to Shadrapa" on a 5th century BCE jar/jug sherd (II-A-7/8, level 3), "to Eshmunyaton" on a 5th century BCE bowl (II-Z-4, level 2-2), and "to our lord (ʿdnn)" on a 5th or 4th century BCE storejar (II-C-9, level 2).[30] The inscribed ivory plaque (3.3 cm x 5 cm) identifies the donor of a (wooden) statue presented to Tanit-Astarte, "The statue which Shillem, son of Mapaʿal, son of ʿIzai made for Tanit Ashtart." Paleographic considerations date the plaque to the 7th century BCE.[31] A molded, glass disc (1 cm diameter) with the symbol of Tanit, found in a 5th century BCE level (II-B- 5, level 2-1) may reflect Tanit's continuing veneration.[32] While Tanit-Astarte is the earliest attested divinity, the number of deities attested only

recherche (Leiden, New York, Köln: Brill, 1995), 127.

27 Markoe compares the water installations and bathtubs to the 7th–6th century BCE pools and hydraulic installations of the shrine at Bostan esh-Sheikh near Sidon (G. Markoe, *Phoenicians* [London: British Museum Press, 2000], 127).

28 Caubet, "Les sanctuaies de Kition", 155-57; Caubet, Tel Aviv University presentation, Feb. 2011.

29 For further details, see Gjerstad, Einar, *Swedish Cyprus Expedition III* (Stockholm: Swedish Cyprus Expedition, 1937), 1-75, pls. I-XXXIX.

30 J. B. Pritchard, *Sarepta: A Preliminary Report on the Iron Age. Excavations of the University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania, 1970–72* (Philadelphia: University Museum, 1975), 7-10.

31 Pritchard, *Preliminary Report*, 7-8.

32 J. B. Pritchard, *Recovering Sarepta, A Phoenician City: Excavations at Sarafand, Lebanon, 1969-1974, by the University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 1978), 97-110.

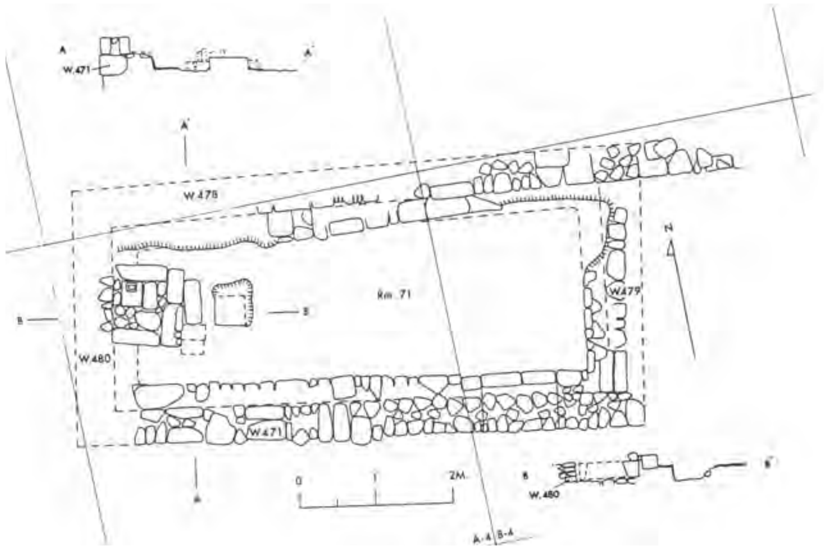


Fig. 4: Sarepta shrine plan (M. Yon, "L'archéologie monumentale partim Orient," in V. Krings [ed.], *La Civilisation phénicienne et punique: Manuel de recherche* [Leiden, New York, Köln: Brill, 1995], 119-131, fig. 3).

once, or twice in the case of Tanit, and the provenience of the inscriptions raises the possibility that numerous deities were venerated in this Phoenician neighborhood shrine from the 8th through the 5th or 4th century BCE.

Shrine 1, tentatively dated to the 8th/6th century BCE, consists of a small, rectangular room (6.40 m x 2.56-2.88 m) with the long axis oriented east-west (Fig. 4). "Cement" covered low ledges (20 cm high and 30-40 cm wide) line the interior walls. A hole in the cement flooring in front of the table/altar accommodates a 40 cm square object, a proposed standing stone or incense altar. An approximately 1 m square stone table or altar, built of reused ashlars and fieldstones and faced with gypsum ashlars, stands against the western wall. This altar matches the nearly identical, gypsum faced, square altar in Kition Temple 1 Floor 2, which dates to the 6th–5th century BCE. All that remains of the 5th–4th century BCE Shrine 2 are stretches of flooring (no table/altar, betyl/incense altar, or benches). Three female figurines found in the fill above the floor – two seated, clothed, demure, pregnant women and one nude female standing on a footstool/base and holding her breasts – are considered representations of Astarte.[33]

Votive objects, in proximity to the altar but also mixed from the two shrines, include numerous Egyptian amulets (including a Shawabti figure, 14 Eyes of Horus, and 33 amulets of Bes, Ptah, Bastet, a cat-headed human, a baboon, Horus as a child, and a sow), a woman's head carved from ivory,

33 Pritchard, *Recovering Sarepta*, 131-48.

cosmetic equipment (an alabaster container for kohl and the faience top of a round box), a terracotta shrine fragment, a sphinx throne, an incense stand, a cultic mask,[34] gaming pieces, and 36 terracotta figurines (primarily bell-shaped standing and seated females and heads of females; no figurines with upraised arms). Saucer lamps provided light in the dimly lit room. Significantly missing from the votive objects are ceramic vessels indicative of sacrificial offerings. Nothing found in the shrine explicitly identifies the deity though the Egyptian objects, the large number of figurines, and sphinx throne typify Phoenician cultic assemblages.[35]

1.4. Mitzpe Yamim (northern Israel)

From Mitzpe Yamim, situated on a southern spur of Mt. Merom, one can see the Sea of Galilee to the east and the Mediterranean Sea to the west. Tyrian coins of the 4th century BCE and second half of the 2nd century BCE,[36] in conjunction with vessels manufactured at the coast, and the site plan identify the tower and shrine as a Tyrian outpost.[37] Interestingly, the storejars are produced locally but a large number of votive juglets and bottles originate in the Jezreel Valley and coastal plain attesting to relations with those regions.[38] A 25 meter square structure/tower with an enclosed courtyard crowns the mountain peak; an enclosure wall extending from the tower encircles a terrace five meters below the peak. Rising above a steep scarp, the southern extent of this enclosure wall incorporates a shrine with an adjacent room (Fig. 5). The two rooms measure 6.0 m x 13.7 m and 4.0 m x 4.8 m, with the longer room oriented roughly east-west. In the main room, paving stones cover the floor, benches line the northern and southern walls, and three equidistant columns along the central long axis support the roof/second storey. This larger room houses two offering tables/altars: a stone altar with four steps in the northwest corner and a second altar near the southern wall.[39]

Objects from this shrine include an Egyptian bronze situla with a typical Phoenician dedicatory inscription secondarily added in the 6th or 5th century BCE, “(belonging) to *ʿkbw* the son of *bd ʿshmn* I am making (this inscription?) for Astarte because (she) heard (my) voice.”[40] Bronze figures of an

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34 At Sarepta, nine masks were found within domestic areas of the city and only one in a shrine. Two examples could have been among kiln wasters and five (life-size and smaller) were found (discarded?) in the street (Pritchard, *Recovering Sarepta*, 71).

35 Pritchard, *Preliminary Report*, 7-10, 97-110, 40.

36 E. Stern, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible. Vol II: The Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian Periods (732—332 B.C.E.)* (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 483.

37 A. Berlin, “The Sanctuary at Mitzpe Yammim: Phoenician Cult and Territory in the Upper Galilee during the Persian Period,” *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 366 (2012), 25-78.

38 S. Wolff, “Archaeology in Israel,” *American Journal of Archaeology* 91/1 (1993), 150.

39 R. Frankel and R. Ventura, “The Miṣpe Yamim Bronzes,” *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 311 (1998), 39-55; Wolff, “Archaeology in Israel.”

40 Frankel and Ventura, “Miṣpe Yamim,” 46, 49.

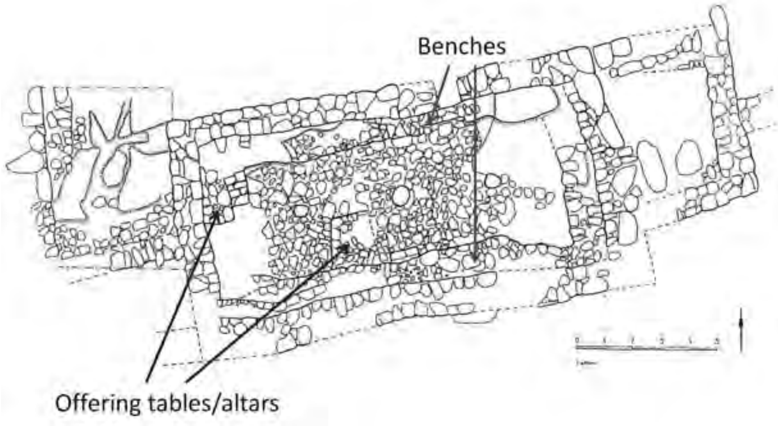


Fig. 5: Mitzpe Yamim shrine plan (based on S. Wolff, "Archaeology in Israel," *AJA* 91, 148, fig. 12).

Apis bull, a recumbent ram, and a prancing lion cub (found during a survey before the excavation); a slate statuette of Osiris, Isis, and Horus, and numerous animal bones, primarily of sheep and goat were found in the vicinity.[41] This is a classic Phoenician shrine to Astarte, with a traditional plan and characteristic Phoenician votive offerings and sacrifices, however, this shrine deviates from the norm in the lack of figurines and location distant from the sea.

What might account for the lack of figurines? To venture out on a limb or spur, *if* soldiers manning the outpost made the offerings to Astarte, and *if* the soldiers were all male, then the lack of figurines might identify them as a gender-specific gift. In a 7th century BCE treaty between Esarhaddon of Assyria and Baal of Tyre, the goddess is invoked as a fierce warrior (see below). Perhaps soldiers posted to this isolated hilltop worshipped the national patron goddess, militant Astarte. By contrast, the numerous female figurines found with cosmetic accessories may reflect female devotion at the Sarepta shrine.

1.5. Tas Silġ (southeastern Malta)

On the promontory of Tas Silġ overlooking Marsaxlokk, Marsascala and St. Thomas Bays, in the late 8th or 7th century BCE, the Phoenicians establish a sanctuary to Astarte incorporating the apse and a standing stone/baetyl (1.3 m high) of a third millennium temple (Fig. 6).[42] The new temple was

[41] Frankel and Ventura, "Miṣpe Yamim," 51-53; Wolff, "Archaeology in Israel," 150; Stern, *The Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian Periods*, 483.

[42] The Phoenician temple buries other prehistoric walls and another betyl (M. Cagiano de Azevedo, A. Caprino, C., Ciasca, F. D'Andria, A. Davico, M. G. Guzzo Amadasi, and

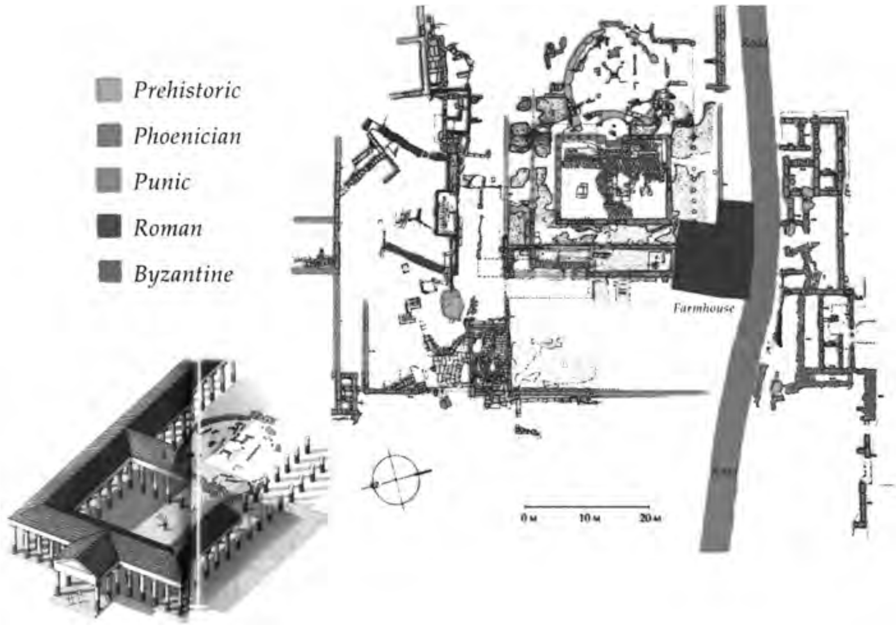


Fig. 6: Tas Silġ shrine plan (Bonanno, A. *Malta: Phoenician, Punic, and Roman*, 2005, 284, 288-9). Prehistoric, Phoenician and Punic walls and stones outlined in black.

entered through a monumental entrance framing a rock slab carved to hold 3 standing stones/betyls.[43] Buhagiar reconstructs the temple based on the Italian excavation reports.

> The main precinct of the new sacred compound centred round a quadrangular court to the immediate west of the prehistoric temple and was surrounded by a …Doric colonnade that stood on a stylobate…. There was a double row of columns on the north and south sides…. The courtyard was paved with flagstones while the colonnaded walk had a floor of a reddish cement compound of crushed pottery sherds and lime with an inlay of regularly spaced white

M. P. Rossignani, *Missione archeologica italiana a Malta. Rapporto preliminare della campagna 1970* [Rome: Consiglio Nazionale della Ricerche, Centro di Studio per la civiltà fenicia e punica, Presso l'Istituto di studi Vicino Oriente dell'Università di Roma, 1973], 55, figs. 32.1, 41). A large basin and *baetylus* measuring 1.30 m high stood 30 m from the prehistoric altar; the stone remained in use throughout the life of the sacred site. Vella notes comparable stones from Ġgantija in Gozo and Tarxien in Malta (Horatio Vella, "Juno and Fertility at the Sanctuary of Tas-Silġ, Malta," in A. Bonanno [ed.], *Archaeology and Fertility Cult in the Ancient Mediterranean* [Amsterdam: B. R. Grüner], 315-22, esp. 315, 320).

43 A similar slab with three standing stones features in the end of the 9th–early/mid 7th c. shrine at Kommos in southern Crete (A. Bonanno, *Malta: Phoenician, Punic, and Roman* [Malta: Midsea Books, 2005], 49, 285.

> marble tesserae…. The prehistoric temple was …transformed into the *cella* of the sanctuary…. The most important works centred round the transformation of its entrance arrangement into a rectangular vestibule with a probable portico of square pilasters which gave a touch of monumentality to the ensemble.[44]

Between the 4th century BCE and 1st century CE, the addition of a portico, successive courtyard walls, plus rooms to the north and south enlarges and embellishes the temple complex.[45]

Numerous inscriptions identify Astarte as the venerated deity and the one who responds to prayers. An inscribed 5th–4th century BCE bone piece found in courtyard 8 reads, "To our lady Astart…this is the *ʿbst* who has dedicated…son of *b'lhls*, son of *k*…[because she heard] the voice of his words."[46] A 2nd century BCE limestone bracket found in a large stone heap just outside the excavation site bears the inscription, "'ps-yaton has dedicated a small pillar(?) (*brk*) to the lady (*rbt*) Astarte."[47] Three inscriptions name Astart *ʾnn* ("of Malta") including one on a stone architectural element. This appellation also appears on early Maltese coins of the Roman period.[48]

From outside the enclosure wall, a cultic dump or midden consists of a thick layer of organic ash, presumably from sacrificial remains, mixed with restorable bowls, plates, rounded cooking pots, small cups, saucers, and a small number of imported amphorae. Engravings executed before firing the pots dedicate the vessels to the deities Astarte and probably Tanit, with their names written out in full or abbreviated. On paleographic grounds, Ciasca dates the Astarte dedications to the 5th–2nd century BCE (none before 500 BCE) and the few "TT"/Tanit examples to the 3rd–2nd or 2nd–1st century BCE.[49]

The midden's ash, bones, and inscribed vessels allow us to reconstruct sacrificial activity. Of the 30% of animal bones for which the species could be identified, 96% were of predominantly young sheep and goat and the remaining 4% were cattle. Representation of all parts of the animals, with a preponderance of the meaty fore-and hindquarters, testifies to the butchering and consumption of entire animals rather than select parts at the site. The fact that only 2% of bones display evidence of burning suggests a divine diet of

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44 M. Buhagiar, "The early Christian remains at Tas-Silġ and San Pawl Milqi, Malta: a Reconsideration of the Archaeological Evidence," *Melita Historica* (New Series) 12 (1996), 1-41 (http://melita_historica.t35.com/mh/19961.html. accessed 10 Nov 2010).

45 Bonanno, *Malta*, 285-6.

46 Bonanno, *Malta*, 84.

47 A. Ciasca, "English Résumé," 149-54 in Bonnello, V. et al., *Missione archeologica italiana a Malta: Rapporto preliminare della campagna 1963* (Roma: Centro di Studi Semitici, 1964), 151.

48 Bonanno, *Malta*, 84.

49 Ciasca, "English Résumé," 151; Bonanno, *Malta*, 43. M. Amadasi Guzzo dates all inscriptions to the 2nd century BCE–1st century CE, a dating not supported by recent archaeological excavations. A comparably inscribed bowl comes from a domestic context in the neighboring town of Żejtun (Bonanno, *Malta*, 83).

boiled rather than roasted meat (Kition bothros 10 bones also lacked signs of burning). Large pots with everted rims found in the dump, many inscribed "to Astarte," were well-suited to boiling the sacrificial offering. Faunal studies also identified edible marine mollusks (96% of total are edible varieties of mollusks), perhaps part of the divine diet.[50]

Not surprisingly for a Phoenician, maritime cult site, local and foreign elements are manifest in the temple and associated finds. An end of 6th/beginning of 5th century BCE limestone figure of a headless, male wearing a short-sleeve, plain dress shows Cypriot influence. Comparable male, votive figures are known from Umm el-Amed, Amrith, and Ayia Irini.[51] Egyptianizing architectural elements include an elaborate pilaster capital, various cavetto cornices, and fragments of a frieze with Egyptian uraei.[52] Hellenistic influences are evident in imported pottery, plastic art, figurative sculpture, and architectural decoration.[53] Surprisingly, the reports mention no figurines. As a fitting epilogue, in the 4th century CE the site becomes a Christian monastery with the prehistoric apse converted into a baptistery[54] and a shrine to "Our Lady of the Snow" stands a few yards away.[55]

2. Temples Known or Surmised from Epigraphic Evidence (Arranged Chronologically)

2.1. Tyre and Sidon (southern Lebanon)

The earliest Tyrian temple may date from the 10th century BCE, if biblical and Josephus' testimony is reliable. According to Josephus, Hiram I of Tyre demolished the old temples and built new shrines for Heracles and Astarte (C*ontra Apion* I, 113, 118 = *Antiquities of the Jews* VIII, 146, 147). Additional references to the goddess and her priests support Josephus' account of a temple that pre-dates the early 5th century BCE Tabnit construction. The 9th century BCE King Ithobaal of Tyre served as "priest of Astarte" (887

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50 A. Bonanno and A. Frendo (eds.), "Excavations at Tas-Silġ, Malta: A Preliminary Report on the 1996-1998 Campaigns Conducted by the Department of Classics and Archaeology of the University of Malta," *Mediterranean Archaeology* 13 (2000), 103-09; A. Corrado, A. Bonanno, and N. Vella, "Bones and Bowls: A Preliminary Interpretation of the Faunal Remains from the Punic Levels in Area B, at the temple of Tas-Silġ, Malta," in S. O'Day, W. Van Neer, and A. Ervynck (eds.), *Behaviour Behind Bones: the Zooarchaeology of Ritual, Religion, Status and Identity* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2004), 47-53, esp. 50-52. According to a prescriptive ritual text from Ugarit, deities dined on boiled fish or fish soup along with meat from ewes and cows (RES 24.250+, line 22) (D. Pardee, *Ritual and Cult at Ugarit* [Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002], 53-5). I thank Mark S. Smith of New York University for this reference.

51 Bonanno, *Malta*, 49-50.

52 Bonanno, *Malta*, 88, 120.

53 Bonnano and Frendo, "Preliminary Report," 96, 99-102.

54 D. Trump, *Malta: An Archaeological Guide* (London: Faber and Faber, 1972), 79-80.

55 Vella, "Tas-Silg, Malta," 316.

BCE) and 1 Kings 11:5 and 33, of contested date, refer to "Astarte of the Sidonians."

Sidon had its own temple to Astarte. An inscribed 8th c. krater from Sidon invokes Hurrian Astarte, "Great-Milku, Prie[st]ess of Hurrian Ashtart (or possibly "Ashtart at the window"). The bones were collected by Ittoba'al. May she be lamented."[56] Inscriptions on the late 6th century and early 5th century BCE sarcophagi of the Sidonian kings Tabnit and his son Eshmunazar (II) invoke temples to Baal of Sidon, Eshmun, Astarte, and Astarte-Shem-Baal, and identify royalty as priests and priestess of Astarte. As a priest of Astarte, and son of Eshmunazar (I) also a priest of Astarte, Tabnit warns potential grave robbers that disturbing his burial "is an abomination to Astarte" (lines 1, 2, 6).[57] Tabnit's son, Eshmunazar (II), records for humans and gods that he and his mother, Amotashtart "priestess of Astarte"

> built the houses of the gods - the [house of Astarte] in Sidon-Land-by-the-Sea, and we established Astarte (in) Lofty-Heavens; and we (it were) who built in the Mountain a house for Eshmun, the prince of the sanctuary of the *Ydll*-Spring, and we (also) established him (in) Lofty-Heavens; and we (it were) who built houses for the gods of the Sidonians in Sidon-Land-by-the-Sea, a house for Baal of Sidon and a house for Astarte-Name of-Baal (KAI 14, 14-18).[58]

This inscription records the construction of two temples, one to Astarte and one to Astarte-Shem-Baal. Also known from Keret's curse (KTU 1.16.VI.54-57 = CTA 16.VI.54-57), Ashtart-Shem-Baal may be understood as the manifestation of Baal's presence. Eshmunazar's successor, King Bodashtart, who reigns in the end of the 6th century BCE, certainly in name and perhaps in deed, continues service to the goddess Astarte. An inscription on an architectural limestone block (CIS I,4) commemorates a building project in Sidon, undertaken in the king's first year. The specific project, whether the erection of a cult place or the addition to or extension of a pre-existent structure, cannot be determined.[59]

How late does Astarte continue as patron deity of the city? While cited cautiously as an historical source, the 2nd century CE (pseudo-) Lucian of

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56 S. Budin, *The Origin of Aphrodite* (Bethesda, MD: CDL, 2003), 246.

57 Gibson, *Phoenician Inscriptions*, 103.

58 Gibson, *Phoenician Inscriptions*, 109.

59 José Zamora, "The Inscription from the First Year of King Bodashtart of Sidon's Reign: *CIS* I, 4," *Orientalia* 76.1 (2007), 100-113. A late 7th century BCE Ammonite seal of unknown provenience, with four registers two of which remain, is inscribed, "'Aminadab who has vowed to ʿAš<tar>te in Sidon, may she bless him" (W. Aufrecht, *A Corpus of Ammonite Inscriptions* [Ancient and Near Eastern Texts & Studies 4; Lewiston/Queenston/Lampeter: Edwin Mellen, 1989], 55-57). Recent news reports mention a temple to Astarte in the southern part of Sidon at the site of Hajj hospital near Saint Joseph's school (http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=1&categ_id=1&article_id=125574#axzz1FjYS3B7j).

Samosata's *De Dea Syria* 4 refers to "another great sanctuary in Phoenicia, which the Sidonians possess. According to them, it belongs to Astarte, but I think that Astarte is Selene."[60] Stamp seals with theophoric names contraindicate Lucian's contention of 2nd century CE Astarte worship. Of the 137, 3rd–2nd century BCE stamp seals from Tyre published by Kaoukabani, one displays the sign of Tanit (#140) and many name the god or theophoric names compounded with Baal or Melqart, but none name Astarte.[61] Olyan's cautionary remarks cited below in connection with stele from Carthage demonstrate that divine names may be common on stelae but rare in theophoric names, or vice versa.

2.2. Memphis (northern Egypt)

If Herodotus' "Foreign Aphrodite" refers to Astarte then he describes a Tyrian enclave with a sanctuary to our goddess.

> To this day there is in Memphis…a particularly fine and well-appointed precinct which was his [Proteus]. The houses around this precinct are inhabited by Phoenicians from Tyre, and the whole district is called the Tyrian Camp. Inside Proteus' precinct is a sanctuary sacred to "the Foreign Aphrodite." (*Histories* 2:112).[62]

A 2nd–1st century BCE stele from Memphis invokes Astarte (of *šmrn)* in conjunction with other goddesses. Krahmalkov translates, "I, Paalastart son of Abdmilqart son of Binbaal son of Abdmilkot erected this object/stele [to my Lady to Ast]arte of *šmrn*. I ask of my Lady/Ladies the great goddess Isis, the goddess Astarte and the [other] gods, 'Bless ye my four sons (sons named) and their mother, Chenastart!'"(KAI 48.2).[63] Donner and Röllig understand the erection of the stele in gratitude for protection (*šmr*) rather than to Astarte of *šmrn*.[64]

2.3. Beirut (central Lebanon)

A dedicatory inscription to Ashtart and approximately 700 identical figurines of women with outstretched arms (considered "Astarte") found in a favissa attest to goddess worship in the early Hellenistic period.[65] The 3rd–2nd century

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[60] H. Attridge and R. Oden Jr., *The Syrian Goddess (De Dea Syria) attributed to Lucian* (SBL Texts and Translations 9; Missoula: Scholars, 1976), 13.

[61] I. Kaoukabani, "Les estampilles phéniciennes de Tyr," *Archaeology and History in the Lebanon* 21 (2005), 2-79.

[62] R. Waterfield, trans. and C. Dewald, *Herodotus: The Histories* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 137.

[63] C. Krahmalkov, *Phoenician-Punic Dictionary* (Leuven: Peeters and Departement Oosterse Studies, 2000), 279, 392-3.

[64] H. Donner and W. Röllig, *Kanaanäische und Aramäische Inschriften. Band II: Kommentar* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1973), 65.

[65] J. Elayi and H. Sayegh, *Un quartier du port phénicien de Beyrouth au Fer III / Perse.*

BCE marble bowl, unfortunately from top soil, is inscribed "to my/his lady Ashtart, may she bless me/him."[66] Curvers and Stuart invoke this inscription in their description of early Hellenistic finds in Bey 019 and 046,

> substantial walls of a large structure in the Foch Street/Weygand Street area suggest the existence of a public building excavated in Bey 019 and 046. The finding of an Aphrodite statue in the fill and a dedication to Ashtarte dated to the 2nd c. BC in addition to the finds already listed by Lauffray, do not exclude the interpretation of the remains of a public building, possible a temple.[67]

Numismatic evidence supports the existence of an Astarte temple down into the 3rd century BCE.[68]

In Bey 010 (U16), Elayi identifies a 6th century BCE temple to Astarte consisting of an open(?) courtyard (25 square meters) enclosed by rooms on all sides. Evidence includes the upper part of a diminutive, conical betyl (25 cm x 20 cm), fragments of sewer piping indicating water installations (evocative of the Paphos installations), terracotta figurines of a woman with outstretched arms, and dog bones (affiliated with Astarte based on an alternate reading of the Kition bowl inscription).[69] Neither the building plan nor the courtyard items provide conclusive or distinctive evidence of Astarte worship.

2.4. Carthage (northern Tunisia)

An inscription from the 4th–3rd century BCE Carthage tophet refers to the dedication of sanctuaries (perhaps in Carthage) and their contents to the two goddesses, "to the Great Ladies (*lrbt*) Astarte and Tanit of the Lebanon" or "Astarte and Tanit in the Lebanon" (KAI 81.1; CIS 1, 3914).[70]

As a cautionary example of the potential for different types of historical records to mislead researchers, Olyan notes that in mid-late first millennium Carthage, thousands of stelae were dedicated to Tanit yet we know of less

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Archéologie et Histoire (Supplement No. 7 to Transeuphratène; Paris: Gabalda, 1998), 224; J. Elayi, "An Unexpected Archaeological Treasure: The Phoenician Quarters in Beirut City Center," *NEA* 73/2-3 (2010), 166.

66 J. Elayi and H. Sayegh, *Un quartier du port phénicien de Beyrouth au Fer III / Perse. Les objets* (Supplement No. 6 to Transeuphratène; Paris: Gabalda, 2000), 267; Hélène Sader, "Phoenician Inscriptions from Beirut," 203-13 in Leonard Lesko (ed.), *Ancient Egyptian and Mediterranean Studies in Memory of William A. Ward* (Providence, RI: Brown University, Department of Egyptology, 1998), 205.

67 H. Curvers and B. Stuart, "Beirut Central District Archaeology Project 1994–2003," 248-65 in C. Doumet-Serhal (ed.), *Decade: A Decade of Archaeology and History in the Lebanon* (Beirut: Lebanese British Friends of the National Museum, 2004), 253.

68 Hélène Sader, "Une dédicace à Astarté," in *Liban, l'autre rive: Exposition présentée à l'Institut du Monde Arabe du 27 octobre 1998 au 2 mai 1999* (Paris: Institut du Monde Arabe, Flammarion, 1998), 172.

69 Elayi, "Beirut City Center," 166.

70 See Krahmalkov, *Dictionary*, 148 for translation.

than ten personal names with that theophoric element. This contrasts with Astarte for whom we have hundreds of names though she rarely appears in dedicatory inscriptions. Astarte compounded names rank third in number behind Baal and Melqart theophoric names attesting to the goddess' popularity.[71]

2.5. Pyrgi (central-western Italy)

Virgil identifies Pyrgi, the commercial harbor of Etruscan Caere, as a Tyrian port town (*Aeneid* 10:84). Three inscriptions on gold lamina dated to ca. 500 BCE, two in Etruscan and one in Phoenician, celebrate the construction of an Astarte shrine by King Thefarie Velianas in the temple of the Etruscan deity Uni-Astre (Juno).[72] Translations vary but all cite a construction for Astarte.

> To the lady Astarte. This holy place (is that) which was made and which was given by TBRY' WLNŠ, king over KYŠRY', in the month of the sacrifice to the sun-god, as a gift (and) as a temple. I built it because Astarte requested (it) of me in the third year of my reign, in the month of KRR, on the day of the burial of the deity. So (may) the years (granted) to the statue (LMʿŠ) of the deity in her temple (be) years like the stars above! (KAI 277).[73]

2.6. Bostan esh-Sheikh (Lebanon)

Dunand attributes the 6th–5th century BCE temples, which lack any form of dedications, to Eshmun and Astarte based on their mention on the 5th century BCE Eshmunazar sarcophagus found in the nearby Sidon necropolis.[74] This tenuous identification is inadequate for our purposes.

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71 S. Olyan, *Asherah and the Cult of Yahweh in Israel* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars, 1988), 37-8, 55, n. 73.

72 J. Fitzmeyer "The Phoenician Inscription from Pyrgi," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 86 (1966), 288.

73 Gibson, *Phoenician Inscriptions*, 151-9. Alternatively, Schmitz translates select words differently and interprets the prayer for longevity on behalf of the donor rather than the statue in the temple.
For the Lady, for Astarte (is) this holy place which Thefarie Velunas, king over Kaysriye, made, and which he put in the temple in *Mtn*, month of solar sacrifices. And he built a chamber because Astarte requested (this) from him, year three – 3 – of his reign, in the month *Krr*, on the day of the deity's interment. And (as for) the years of one who makes a gift to the deity in the temple, (may) these (be) years like the stars (P. Schmitz, "The Phoenician Text from the Etruscan Sanctuary at Pyrgi," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 115/4 [1995], 559-75, esp. 562). Knoppers interprets this plaque as a funerary text, dedicating a shrine to Astarte on the death of an individual. He bases his interpretation on the mentions of šmš, god of the underworld; the burial of the dead, noting the well-attested correspondence of "deity" and "the dead" in Near Eastern and Hittite literature; and *bt*, which refers to both temple and tomb (G. Knoppers, "The God in His Temple": The Phoenician Text from Pyrgi as a Funerary Inscription," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 51/2 [1992], 105-20).

74 J. Betlyon, "The Cult of 'Asherah/'Elat at Sidon," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 44/1

2.7. Eryx (western Sicily)

Three inscriptions, two of which originate in Carthage, mention Erycine Astarte. From Carthage, CIS I, 135 records a dedication "to the great lady (*rbt*) Astarte *ʿRQ* [Astarte Eryx] … because she heard his v[oice…]" and CIS I, 3776 names mother and daughter prostitutes serving the goddess, Amotmelqart and Arishutbaal respectively (CIS 1, 3776), notably with theophoric names compounded with Melqart and Baal. CIS 1, 140 dedicates a bronze altar to "Astarte of Eryx." Both CIS I, 135 and I, 140 are written in Punic.[75] The goddess presumably resided in a temple or shrine in Eryx, though it may have been a Punic rather than a Phoenician cult site.

2.8.Umm el-Amed (southern Lebanon)

Two narrow, Hellenistic (4th–2nd century BCE) structures in the naturally elevated, open-air precincts of Umm el-Amed (ancient Hammon, 20 km south of Tyre) are identified as temples of Milkashtart and Astarte.[76] No inscription explicitly attributes a temple to Astarte, rather, an eleven line inscription carved on a marble plaque and dated to 222 BC (the 26th year of Ptolemy) describes a portico constructed for Astarte within the shrine of the god of Hammon. "The god the Angel of Milkashtart" and "the citizens of Hammon" built the portico. Astarte's relationship to the landlord is unclear; they appear to be simply temple-mates rather than in an intimate relationship.

1. The portico of the west quarter and
2. its …, which the god the Angel of Milkashtart
3. and his servants the citizens of Hammon built
4. for Astarte in the shrine of the god of Hammon,
5. in the 26th year of Ptolemy . . . (KAI 19)[77]

The inscription was purchased in the antiquities market, allegedly from Maʿsoub, five kilometers from Umm el-Amed.[78]

(1985), 53.

75 Krahmalkov, *Dictionary,* 391.

76 Both temples consist of rectangular structures, oriented east-west with the focus to the west, set within the western half of a large courtyard enclosed by rooms and other structures. The roughly symmetrical plan of the Milkastarte temple with a free-standing shrine contrasts with the eastern temple's asymmetric courtyard, skewed temple orientation, and ancillary rooms or structures abutting the shrine. Egyptian elements such as uraei and winged discs adorn temple lintels (M. Dunand and R. Duru, *Oumm el-ʿAmed: Une ville de l'époque hellénistique aux Échelles de Tyre* [Paris: Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient Adrien Maisonneuve, 1962], 169-72, figs. 15, 32; P. Wagner, *Der ägyptische Einfluss auf die phönizische Architektur* [Bonn: Rudolf Habelt, 1980], 27-35, fig 16: 1, 2).

77 Gibson, *Phoenician Inscriptions,* 119; Krahmalkov, *Dictionary,* 86 translates "eastern portico".

78 Dunand and Duru, "Oumm el-ʿAmed," 185-87.

2.9. Gozo/Gaulus

Settlement commences on Gaulus (Gozo), a small island seven kilometers northwest of Malta, in the 5th century BCE.[79] Inscribed in *Punic* (4th–2nd century BCE), a marble slab that twice mentions the people of Gozo invokes shrines to various deities including Astarte (KAI 62; CIS 1, 132).[80] This inscription in not considered in our corpus as it is written in Punic, not Phoenician.

2.10. Paphos (southwestern Cyprus)

From Paphos, the intelligible third and fourth lines of a 3rd century BCE Phoenician inscription read, "And I made/built [this…] for Astarte of Paphos."[81] A goddess of a city betokens a temple; the question is in which centuries the Phoenicians identified Wanassa ("the lady"), the local goddess of Palaepaphos, with Astarte. This earliest explicit mention of "Astarte" dates to the 3rd century BCE, but both the intramural and extramural remains and Phoenician inscriptions convince Maier and Karageorghis that the local-Aegean goddess Wanassa-Aphrodite "assimilated traits of the Phoenician Astarte as early as the 6th century BCE."[82] An historical trajectory similar to Kition may have been operative at Paphos. At this international trading center, foreigners identified their chief goddess with the regnant local goddess – Phoenicians knew her as Astarte.

According to the Roman historian Tacitus, the sacred area consisted of a large open court enclosing a small sanctuary and an open-air altar. In contrast to other local sanctuaries, an aniconic, conical stone stood for the deity (*Historiae* II.3).[83] Excavation of the Late Bronze Age sanctuary corroborates the Roman account. Archaeologists uncovered a 1.22 m high, black, local gabbro stone and an open court/temenos (28 m long) demarcated by massive cut stones in front of a pillared hall oriented north-south (23.8 m x 11.5 m).[84] A late 13th c. Mycenaean-style capital and Minoan "goddess with upraised arms" and "horns of consecration" provide a date around 1200.[85] Late Bronze Age representations of the goddess include the conical black stone, the goddess with upraised arms (the vast majority), and a Levantine style

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79 M. Aubet, *The Phoenicians and the West: Politics, Colonies, and Trade*. 2nd edit. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 235.

80 Bonanno, Malta, 79-81. "The people of Gaulus rebuilt the three [sanctuaries and the] sanctuary of the house of XX and the sa[nctuary … and the] sanctuary of the house of Astarte and the sanct[uary]…"

81 RES 921.3/4; F. Maier and V. Karageorghis, *Paphos: History and Archaeology* (Nicosia: A. G. Leventis Foundation, 1984), 183; Krahmalkov, Dictionary, 392). Masson and Sznycer reconstruct "[ ] *qdš* '[ ]" in line two as "[M] QDŠ '[Z]," "ce sanctuaire-ci," which would be welcome for the purposes of this paper but remains conjectural (O. Masson and M. Sznycer, *Recherches sur les Phéniciens à Chypre* [Paris and Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1972], 84).

82 Maier and Karageorghis, *Paphos*, 183.

83 Maier and Karageorghis, *Paphos*, 84, n. 39.

84 Maier and Karageorghis, *Paphos*, 91-94, 99.

85 Maier and Karageorghis, *Paphos*, 101.

figurine.[86] Similar to the temple at Tas Silġ, this temple combines foreign elements from Egypt and the Levant to the Aegean.

3. Two Unprovenienced Objects Dedicated to Astarte

A 16.5 cm high bronze figurine of a seated, naked female in a gesture of benediction likely comes from El Carambolo, near Seville (Fig. 7).[87] Tentatively dated to the 8th/7th century BCE, the figurine, which appears to be a Phoenician import, displays Egyptian features such as her hair style, eyes, and pointy breasts. She wears no clothing following Levantine fashion but presents a more stocky body type than either her Egyptian or Levantine counterparts. The goddess' feet rest on an inscribed pedestal or footstool inscribed to "Ashtart *hr*" (Hurrian(?) Astarte). "This throne was made by Bʿlytn, son of Dʿmmlk, and by ʿbdbʿl, son of Dʿmmlk, son of Yš'll for

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[86] Roman building nearly obliterated the Paphian structures from 1200 BC to 100 AD but Archaic and Classical period votive gifts from the Site KC bothroi west of the sanctuary exhibit Cypriot, Greek, and Phoenician features (Maier and Karageorghis, *Paphos*, 183, 276-7). The Roman temple follows the Levantine plan, incorporates LBA structures, and continues worship of the goddess in the guise of a conical stone (Maier and Karageorghis, *Paphos*, 276-77). Outside the Northeast Gate, an Archaic period (800–400 BCE) shrine in an open area enclosed by a temenos wall may be a Phoenician structure based on the architectural plan. If a shrine for Astarte worship, whether exclusively or not, then Phoenicians worshipped in both the large, intramural temple and this small, extramural sacred site, comparable to the situation at Kition-*Kathari* and Kition-*Bamboula* (Maier and Karageorghis, *Paphos*, 191-2).

Although not explicitly named in an inscription, Astarte was likely worshipped at nearby Amathus. Like Paphos and Kition**,** the inhabitants of this port town venerated the goddess *a-na/a-na-ma/a-na-ta* whose name appears in the earliest dedicatory inscriptions, including on an archaic period colossal stone vase (P. Aupert et al., *Guide to Amathus*. Transl. by Diana Buitron-Oliver and Andrew Oliver. Edited by Costoula Sclavenitis [Nicosia: Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation in collaboration with the Cyprus Department of Antiquities, 2000], 26). Based on find spots of familiar Phoenician cultic objects, Astarte worship in the palace centered on a grotto and sanctuary from the 8th century BCE., and a 6th century BCE sanctuary to Astarte is reconstructed on the summit of Vikles, the hill immediately to the east of Amathus (*ibid.*, 24, 26, 59-62). The goddess is represented in Minoan (woman with upraised arms), Egyptian (Hathor), Phoenician (naked, facing front), and Greek forms and identified, much later, as Aphrodite. A late 8th century BCE gold repoussé plaque of a naked woman with Hathor hair-style and arms hanging at her sides (a 9th century BCE image that becomes more common in the mid-8th century BCE), a 6th century BCE sphinx throne from the Vikles sanctuary, Hathor stele capitals (end 6th century BCE), and an early 5th century BCE sarcophagus depicting nude females with hands under their breasts (*ibid.*, 23, 62) are all well-attested Phoenician cultic elements. They suggest that, though not named, Astarte was worshipped here from the 9th at least through the 5th century BCE.

[87] The figurine belongs to a treasure hoard of 2950 grams of 24-carat gold items including bracelets, a chain with pendant, buckles, and belt- and forehead plates (J. M. Carriazo, *El Tresors y las primeras excavaciones en El Carambolo* [Camas: Seville, 1970]).



Fig. 7: El Carambolo Astarte figurine (C. Bonnet, *Astarté: Dossier documentaire et perspectives historiques* [Rome: Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, 1996], front cover photo).

Ashtart-hr, our Lady, because she heard the voice of their words."[88] The bronze figurine provides an image and likeness of the goddess.

A 2nd century stone sphinx throne from Khirbet et-Tayibe, near Tyre, bears a dedicatory inscription to Astarte on the front socle between the sphinxes (KAI 17). Gibson translates, "To my lady (*rbty*) Astarte who is (enthroned) in the holy congregation (*gw*), that which is my very own (gift), ʿBD'BST's son of Bodbaal."[89] Wings of the flanking sphinxes form the seat and back portion of the empty throne. Two male deities carved in relief on a stele appear on the back of the throne, and a large crescent and two lotus flowers fill the front space above the inscription.[90] Levantine royalty and deities ruled from comparable sphinx thrones, including the Byblian King Ahiram and the Israelite god Yahweh.[91]

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88 C. Bonnet, *Astarté: Dossier documentaire et perspectives historiques* (Rome: Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche,1996), 127, 161.

89 Gibson, *Phoenician Inscriptions*, 116-7. Krahmalkov interprets *gw* as a place name, rendering a completely different reading of the inscription, "<Dedicated> to Astarte of GW, my deity" (Krahmalkov, *Dictionary*, 138). Donner and Röllig read "welche in ihrem Heiligtume ist," consecrating the throne to the goddess "in her sacred shrine" rather than the "holy congregation" (Donner and Röllig, KAI, 25).

90 Gibson 2000, 116-118.

91 Markoe, *Phoenicians*, Pl. V; I Kings 6: 23-28. From 6th century BCE Solonte/Soluntum (north coast of Sicily), a robed goddess sits on a sphinx throne "avec identification à Astarté" (G. Tore, "L'art. Sculpture en ronde-bosse," 448-70 in V. Krings [ed.], *La civilisation phénicienne et punique: Manuel de recherche* [Leiden, New York, Köln: Brill,

4. Discussion

Both archaeological and epigraphic evidence demonstrate veneration of multiple deities within a single space so the temples and shrines likely served multiple deities including Astarte. Furthermore, the retrieved remains reflect only a small part of a much larger picture; therefore, the proffered generalizations are merely suggestive but, hopefully, representative.

Neither excavated material nor inscriptions definitively date our temple and shrine foundations, however, the earliest Phoenician temples for Astarte worship appear to be in 10th century BCE Tyre/Sidon, followed by 9th century BCE Kition-*Kathari*.[92] Phoenician Astarte's worship peaks in the 5-4th centuries and dwindles through the 3rd and 2nd centuries BCE.

Overall, differences among worship sites are more apparent than similarities. The diversity stems from temple design following the fashion adopted by the builders rather than the nature or origin of the deity.[93] All share one feature, they overlook the harbor or the sea in the distance. Other similarities among structures are typically regional. For example, the three easternmost structures share a Levantine plan; they are rectangular structures oriented east-west, with the cella/holy-of-holies, stone table or altar in the west, and benches lining the walls (Kition-*Kathari*, Sarepta, Mitzpe Yamim) and at Kition and Palaeopaphos, Phoenicians may have worshipped Astarte both in a temple and a shrine situated in another part of the site. Among the overseas sites of Kition-*Kathari*, Tas Silġ, and Paphos, the temple incorporates a previous cultic structure. As the patron deity in the capital city, Astarte likely resides in a temple and presides from a sphinx throne. At some Phoenician emporia or settlements, the goddess receives designated space within the temple to another, such as the portico in the Umm el-Amed temple to the God of Hammon or the small shrine in the Pyrgi temple to Uni (Juno).[94]

We now turn to the goddess herself. Why did the Phoenicians choose a goddess as their patron deity? Most Ancient Near Eastern kingdoms worshipped patron gods. Astarte and Asherah of Tyre, and Ishtar of Nineveh and of Arbela (both mentioned in the vassal treaties of Esarhaddon) are notable exceptions.[95] Hermary notes that, in general, coastal urban centers on the islands of Cyprus, Rhodes, and Crete adopt a goddess as their patron deity.[96]

1995, 459, fig. 6).

92 Interestingly, Asherah preceded or accompanied Astarte at Tyre. From a Late Bronze Age Ugaritic text we learn that Keret stopped in his travels to make a vow at "the shrine of Asherah of Tyre."

93 Wright, *Ancient Building*, 271.

94 In Delos, an island in the Cyclades, "a Sidonian honored Astarte in the official Sarapieion 'en l'assimilant a Isis'" (*Ins Délos* 2132; M. Baslez, "Cultes et dévotions des Phéniciens en Grèce: Les divinités marines," 289-305 in C. Bonnet, E. Lipiński and P. Marchetti [eds.], *Studia Phoenicia IV. Religio Phoenicia* [Namur: Société des Études Classiques, 1986], 291).

95 Thanks to Mark S. Smith for these references.

96 A. Hermary, "Votive Offerings in the Sanctuaries of Cyprus, Rhodes and Crete during

Phoenician worship of the goddess Astarte as a city patron follows the Ishtar tradition and favors and facilitates the goddess' worship at Phoenician colonies and emporia at island urban settlements.

Esarhaddon of Assyria invokes Astarte in an early 7th century BCE treaty with King Baal of Tyre (670 BCE) to punish Tyre should she violate the treaty (line 18): "May Ashtart break your bow in the thick of battle and have you crouch at the feet of your enemy."[97] This militant, warrior aspect of Astarte evident in Ugaritic texts, Egyptian inscriptions, and the Esarhaddon treaty is unattested in the personalized dedications. According to personal testimonies dating from the 9th century BCE (*Kathari* bowl) through the 4th/3rd century BCE (Carthage, *Bamboula*, Eryx inscriptions), Astarte hears and answers individuals' prayers. Only two inscriptions specify the request; the Pyrgi inscription, dated to around 500 BCE, may invoke longevity (following Schmitz's translation) and an individual in 2nd–1st century BCE Memphis erects a stele to Isis, Astarte, and [other] gods to invoke blessings on his four sons and their mother (or, alternatively, for protection).

Astarte is worshipped in various guises. Local manifestations include, among others, Astarte of Kition (*kt*), of Paphos (*pp*), of Malta (*ʾnn*), and of Eryx. She functions independently but also conjoined with both gods and goddesses. As Ashtart-shem-baal, she may serve as a manifestation of Baal but in a conjoined goddesses such as Tanit-Astarte the two may be perceived as different faces of the same goddess, with each retaining her own name and identity.

Astarte is manifest in various forms, as an aniconic stone/betyl (also used for gods such as the god of Israel, Genesis 28:16-18), a figurine or statue, or an attribute animal. Astarte may have been made manifest through an attribute animal, such as the ox or cow skulls worn by priests or dedicants

the Late Geometric and Archaic Periods," in V. Karageorghis and N. Stampolidis (eds.), *Eastern Mediterranean: Cyprus – Dodecanese – Crete 16th–6th cent. B.C.* (Athens: University of Crete and A. G. Leventis Foundation, 1998), 265-275, esp. 266. On Cyprus in general, city sanctuaries, as opposed to rural shrines, celebrate the local goddess (Old Paphos, Amathus, Kition, Tamassos, Idalion, and probably Kourion and Marion), though Salamis worshipped a male assimilated with Zeus and a Marion city shrine seems dedicated to a male god. The god, who often assimilates with Apollo, is worshipped at Cypriot secondary city shrines, rural cult sites, and mountain sanctuaries (Kourion, Tamassos, Golgoi-Ayios Photios, Malloura, and Pyla).

[97] S. Parpola and K. Watanabe, *Neo-Assyrian Treaties and Loyalty Oaths* (State Archives of Assyria vol. II) (Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1988), 27. Other deities invoked and the punishment they will inflict for violating the treaty include Ishtar, Anat-Bethel (and Bethel) who will "deliver you to a man-eating lion," Bal-sameme, Baal-malage, and Baal-saphon who will "raise an evil wind against your ships to undo their moorings and tear out their mooring pole, may a strong wave sink them in the sea and a violent tide [rise] against you," Melqart and Eshmun to "deliver your land to destruction and your people to be deportation…May they [uproot] you from your land and take away the food from your mouth, the clothes from your body, and the oil for your anointing" and, finally, Astarte (lines 6-18). Astarte's role corresponds to that of Athena, patron goddess of Athens; both are warrior goddesses who protect their respective cities.

found on the Kition temple Floor 3.[98] She has been readily identified with various figural images: the Minoan "goddess with upraised arms" (Kition, Paphos), the female figurine with extended arms (Beirut), Levantine-style bell-shaped figurines of women grasping/supporting their breasts (Sarepta), demure, pregnant females (Sarepta), a Greek-style goddess (Kition-*Bamboula*, Paphos), and a seated or standing nude (Sarepta, El-Carambolo). Do they all represent Astarte? In the Ancient Near East, nude females likely represent divinities, as no mortal woman would appear naked. Certainly the El-Carambolo enthroned, nude female depicts Astarte (or another goddess); a queen or dedicant would be properly attired. Perhaps the risqué representation is an identifying feature of Phoenician Astarte. Would a Phoenician consider a Minoan or Greek figurine a representation of Astarte? Perhaps, though given the preference for her Phoenicians name, the Phoenicians may have favored a Phoenician representation. If so, the figurine with upraised arms constitutes the Minoan's representation and the Greek statue depicts her Greek incarnation – potentially all representations of the same goddess. "What's in a name? that which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet" (Romeo and Juliet). The clothed, pregnant figurines may be votive items rather than deities, representing prayers for a fruitful pregnancy modeled in the round.

Consistent with the eclectic nature of Astarte worship and Phoenician culture in general, we find significant numbers of Egyptian/Egyptianizing features in connection with Astarte worship. The large number of Egyptian

98 An aniconic, standing stone/betyl (or socket for one or three stones) marks the deity's presence in the Beirut, Paphos, Sarepta(?), and Tas Silġ temples/shrines. While Astarte is not named in an inscription, the comparable stone in a late 9th–early/mid-7th century BCE Phoenician rural shrine at Kommos, Crete (and Solonte, Sicily, with an Astarte sphinx throne) may have marked her presence there as well. Similar thrice-perforated stones with three stones/betyls are known from Temple B at the harbor site of Kommos, Crete, and two examples from sacred structures in Solonte, Sicily (G. Falsone, "Sicile," 674-97 in V. Krings (ed.), *La civilisation phénicienne et punique: Manuel de recherche* [Leiden, NY, Köln: Brill, 1995], 688-89). Built over an 11th century BCE shrine of similar plan, Temple B Phase 2 (end of 9th–early/mid-7th century BCE) of the Kommos temple resembles a Levantine shrine (though Cretan shrines of this period are poorly known): a small rectangular room oriented east-west with a stone platform/bench along the north and possibly south walls. Along the central axis moving into the interior of the sanctuary, from west to east, stand a central pillar, a hearth, and near the western end of the room, three tapering, stone pillars set into a stone slab sitting on the floor. Votive gifts wedged between and behind the pillars include a bronze horse, a faience figure of Sekhmet (Egyptian goddess of war), a faience figurine of a male (possibly Nefetum, son of Sekhmet), and a bronze shield. 9th century BCE Phoenician storejars and jugs, in conjunction with local pottery, lay scattered in the temple and in dumps to the south (Joseph Shaw, "Kommos in Southern Crete: An Aegean Barometer for East-West Interconnections," 13-24 in Vassos Karageorghis and Nikolaos Stampolidis eds. *Eastern Mediterranean: Cyprus-Dodecanese-Crete 16th – 6th cent. B.C.* [Athens: University of Crete and A. G. Leventis Foundation, 1998], 18, fig. 4). Negbi refers to Archaic and Hellenistic period examples of three pillars from sites in Sicily, Sardinia, Malta and Carthage, often from tophet contexts (O. Negbi, "Early Phoenician Presence in the Mediterranean Islands: A Reappraisal," *AJA* 96 [1992], 609).

amulets (Kition-*Kathari*, Sarepta, Tas Silġ, Mitzpe Yamim), the Egyptianizing sphinx thrones (Sarepta, Soluntum, Khirbet et-Tayibe), and Egyptian archi-tectural elements (Tas Silġ, Paphos, Umm el-Amed) may be attributable to commercial and aesthetic rather than theological considerations.

Even in distant locations, Astarte retains her Phoenician name and identity – perhaps as a marker and anchor of Phoenician identity against the wave of Hellenistic culture. The Pyrgi lamina name "Uni-Astre" in Etruscan and "Astarte" in Phoenician, and in 3rd century BCE Paphos the goddess is called "Aphrodite Paphia" in Greek but remains "Astarte of Paphos" for the Phoenicians. She blooms with the Phoenician city-states in the 10th century BCE, blossoms with their maritime activities in the 5th and 4th centuries BCE, and outlasts their demise in the late 4th century BCE, but thereafter is gradually supplanted by other goddesses.

Before Kypris was Aphrodite

Stephanie L. BUDIN

Kypria, Kypris, Kyprogéneia, the goddess who would become for the Greeks Aphrodite, emerged on the island of Cyprus. For Hesiod it was the first place she made landfall after her birth from the genitals of Kronos (*Theogony* 188-202). For Homer and the Homeridai, it was the site of her most important temple – Paphos – where she adorned herself to seduce Ankhises (*Hymn* V, 58-66) or washed away her shame at being caught *in flagrante* with Ares (*Odyssey* 8, 390-395).

The archaeological evidence indicates that an eroticized female divinity emerged on the island in the Late Bronze Age. As will be discussed below, this divinity evolved out of an indigenous Cypriot tradition of female iconography which combined with an imported Nude Female/Goddess tradition from Syria in the 15^{th} century BCE. During the Dark Ages that followed the fall of the Bronze Age, this eroticized divinity travelled from Cyprus to the Aegean, first to Crete and eventually to the Greek mainland. Here she evolved into the Greek goddess called Aphrodite, whose most common epithets continued to connect her with the island of Cyprus.

Interestingly, this Greek Aphrodite does not appear to have had much of a presence amongst the Iron Age Cypriots. The earliest inscriptions to mention Aphrodite by that name in the Syllabo-Cypriot corpus only date to the fourth century BCE. Where we would expect to find the name of the goddess, at her attested sanctuaries and cult sites, we instead find titles – Queen, Goddess, the Paphian, She of Goloi. It is not until the fourth century that Kypris[1] makes a full circuit: Aphrodite Kypria – the goddess of Cyprus – is finally attested on the island.

This paper is a study of that process of evolution and identification. First I am interested in the various elements that gave rise on Cyprus to the eroticized goddess. My data are the nude female terracottas and bronze figurines that are taken as the basis for Kypris-Aphrodite's sexual persona, and the baetyls that are the foci of goddess cults at Paphos, Kition, and Enkomi. An additional question in this regard is whether or not we might glean anything about the persona of this goddess – how the early Cypriots understood her, even in the absence of textual materials. My second interest is how the Hel-

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1 I here use the name Kypris to designate the indigenous Cypriot goddess in contrast to her Hellenic cognate Aphrodite.

lenized goddess Aphrodite came to be established on Cyprus, functionally displacing and/or replacing the indigenous Kypris. My primary data here are the titles and epithets of the Syllabo-Cypriot corpus that all together are taken as referring to the single deity Aphrodite. Finally, I consider why it was Kypris-Aphrodite specifically who was understood to be the Cypriot goddess *par excellence*, virtually a Cypriot national mother, in spite of all the other deities long worshipped on the island.

Clearly, the history of the goddess of Cyprus is more complex than the Greek evidence suggests, more than the random chance of a goddess swimming up to the shore of Petra tou Romiou, drying off, and getting dressed. It is this history that I wish to explore here. Where did this goddess come from? How did the early Cypriots understand her? Was she originally one goddess or many? Why is she, more than any other deity, pointedly associated with Cyprus as a whole? And how did she become Aphrodite on the island?

1. From Hausfrau *to Sex Goddess: The Origins of Aphrodite in the Cypriot Bronze Age*

1.1. Figurines

The earliest traces of the erotic Aphrodite on Cyprus are the highly eroticized Bird-faced figurines that appear throughout the island in the LC II period (1450–1200) (Fig. 1).[2] It is clear that the Cypriot Bird-faced terracottas bear a striking resemblance to the nude female figurines of Syria, especially those from the Orontes Valley region (Fig 2).[3] They have in common their nudity, *en face* posture, jewelry, hair-style, prominent breasts, even more prominent pubic triangles, and, in some instances, the criss-cross over the chest. These Bird-faced figurines appear in Cyprus at precisely that period when there are extensive contacts with the Levant, and when these contacts had a profound influence on the material expression of Cypriot religion.[4] As a result, we might easily suggest that Near Eastern aspects entered into the persona of the eventual Kypris-Aphrodite at this point, and thus there are shades of Ištar and Išḫara in our Cypro-Aegean goddess.

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[2] Stephanie L. Budin, *The Origin of Aphrodite* (Bethesda, MD: CDL Press, 2003), 140-145; Jennifer M. Webb, *Ritual Architecture, Iconography and Practice in the Late Cypriot Bronze Age* (Jonsered: Paul Åströms Förlag, 1999), 209-215; Vassos Karageorghis, *The Coroplastic Art of Ancient Cyprus II* (Nicosia: Leventis Foundation, 1993), 3-14; Patrick Begg, *Late Cypriot Terracotta Figurines* (Jonsered: Paul Åströms Förlag, 1991), 62-63; Robert Merrillees, “Mother and Child: A Late Cypriote Variation on an Eternal Theme,” *Mediterranean Archaeology* I (1988), 56; Jacqueline Karageorghis, *La Grande Déesse de Chypre et son culte* (Lyons: Maison de l’Orient Mediteranéen, 1977), 72-85.

[3] Leila Badre, *Les figurines anthropomorphes en terre cuite à l’âge du bronze en Syrie* (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuther, 1980), Chapter 2.

[4] Louise Steel, *Cyprus Before History: From the Earliest Settlers to the End of the Bronze Age* (London: Duckworth Publishers, 2004), 169–181.



Fig. 1: Late Bronze age Cypriot bird-faced figurine, British Museum, Inv. A 15. Drawing by Paul C. Butler.



Fig. 2: Middle Bronze age nude female figurine from Ebla, TM.92.P.875+TM94. P.530. Drawing by Paul C. Butler.

However, it must be remembered that the Bird-faced figurines did not appear *ex nihilo* on the island. To the contrary, they are part of an on-going development in a centuries-long evolution of female figurines dating back into the Early Cypriot (EC) III period (2000–1900). In the Early Bronze Age the Cypriots began to fashion plank-like terracotta figurines depicting females with elaborately decorated costumes (Fig. 3).[5] Over the centuries these terracottas became increasingly three-dimensional and disrobed, acquiring a distinctive spindle shape as early as MC III (1725–1600) (Fig. 4). The Bird-faced figurines of the Late Bronze Age, then, can be seen as a step in this evolution. The indigenous element of the Bird-faced figurines is especially evident in their maternal iconography; in complete contrast to their Levantine predecessors, close to half of the Cypriot Bird-faced figurines are kourotrophic – they are depicted holding an infant.[6] This is a continuation of Cypriot precedent, showing a stark contrast with the iconography of the

5 A. Bernard Knapp, *Prehistoric and Protohistoric Cyprus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 98-101; Steel, *Cyprus Before History*, 147-148; Budin, *Origin of Aphrodite*, 119-124; Anna Laetitia a Campo, *Anthropomorphic Representations in Prehistoric Cyprus* (Jonsered: Paul Åströms Förlag, 1994), 98-114; Vassos Karageorghis, *The Coroplastic Art of Ancient Cyprus* I (Nicosia: Leventis Foundation, 1991), 49-94; Marcia K. Mogelonski, *Early and Middle Cypriot Terracotta Figurines* (Ph.D. diss.: Cornell University, 1988); J. Karageorghis, *La grande déesse*, 54-60.

6 Stephanie L. Budin, *Images of Woman and Child from the Bronze Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 259-266; Webb, *Ritual Architecture*, 209.



Fig. 3: Early Cypriot plank figurine, Cyprus Museum, Inv. 1963/IV-20/12. Drawing by Paul C. Butler.



Fig. 4: Middle Cypriot Dark Ware female figurine, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Inv. 74.51.1537. Drawing by Paul C. Butler.

Levant, where kourotrophism appears rarely and *only* under Egyptian influence.[7] The terracottas are thus Levantine in influence, but show continuity with Cypriot iconography.

In spite of the continuous sequence of female figurines from EC III through LC II, there are developments that suggest that the original meaning of the figurines changed over the course of the Bronze Age. In their earliest manifestation, the EC III–MC plank figurines appear to have represented individual, mortal women, most likely in the context of family and lineage.[8] The elaborate markings on the figurines' surfaces are understood to be marks of individuality, much like a Scottish tartan. Over the course of the Middle Bronze Age, these marks, as well as the clothing generally, disappeared. Furthermore, two secondary terracotta items disappeared from the Cypriot repertoire over the course of the MBA – Cypriot scenic compositions and model cradle-boards/infants. In short, the items that depicted family, property, and progeny fell out of use. Thus, it is unlikely that the plank figurines, which themselves appear to have embodied women in familial context, continued to have their original meanings.

[7] Budin, *Images*, Chapters 3 and 5.

[8] Budin, *Images*, 243-245; David Frankel and Jennifer Webb, *Marki Alonia: An Early and Middle Bronze Age Settlement in Cyprus* (Sävedalen: Paul Åströms Förlag, 2006), 317; A Campo, *Anthropomorphic Representations*, 166-169.



Fig. 5: Winged, nude goddess detail from LBA Cypriot glyptic. From Jennifer M. Webb, *Ritual Architecture, Iconography and Practice in the Late Cypriot Bronze Age* (Jonsered: Paul Åströms Förlag, 1999), Figure 85.1, p. 268. Used with kind permission of the author.

The most dramatic change in identity is that the figurines became divine, representing goddesses rather than mortal women.[9] Their close iconographic correspondences with their Levantine cognates during a period when the Levant had profound influence on the physical manifestation of Cypriot cult partially support this. More important is the correspondence with contemporary Cypriot iconography that is most certainly divine in nature. This includes the (admittedly rare) nude female present in the Cypriot glyptic (Fig. 5), which shows an *en face*, nude female in contexts with supernatural entities. The horned miter and wings clearly indicate that the nude female is divine.

How did this change occur? Why would images of mortal wives and mothers become depictions of erotic goddesses? I would like to offer a hypothesis regarding the evolution of the figurines from their EC III origins through the Late Bronze Age. As stated, the clothed and decorated plank figurines of the Early Bronze Age represented mortal women within their lineage. Over time, with the establishment of social hierarchies in Prehistoric Bronze Age Cyprus, increased attention to funerary ritual suggests that much of the acquisition of status was based on lineage, specifically on what might be termed a cult of ancestors.[10] It is possible that during this development the female figurines that were originally associated with family came to have greater connections with the concept of long-term lineage, thus serving as

9 Stephanie L. Budin, "Girl, Woman, Mother, Goddess: Bronze Age Cypriot Terracotta Figurines," *Medelhavsmuseet: Focus on the Mediterranean* 5 (2009), 83-86; Webb, *Ritual Architecture*, 211.

10 Knapp, *Prehistoric*, 79, with extensive citations; Priscilla Keswani, *Mortuary Ritual and Society in Bronze Age Cyprus* (London: Equinox, 2004), 153-154.



Fig. 6: Late Bronze Age Cypriot Normal-faced Figurine, Cyprus Museum, Inv. A 51. Drawing by Paul C. Butler.

small foci in a cult of ancestor worship. Revered great-grandmothers eventually came to be worshipped as goddesses, especially as Levantine influence caused their iconography to conform to near-by goddess representations. Indeed, if the hypothesis of Jennifer Webb and David Frankel is correct that the EC I–II anthropomorphic bas-relief in the dromos of Tomb 6 at Karmi-Palealona is a forerunner of the EC III plank figurines, then the images may have been associated with ancestor cult from the very beginning.[11]

The change to Bird-faced iconography was not the last stage in the evolution of the figurines. Just as Levantine influence gave them broad hips and big noses, Aegean conventions, which entered into the Cypriot repertoire right on the heels of the Levantine,[12] tamed their proportions, decorated them with paint, and robbed them of their final vestiges of kourotrophic iconography (Fig. 6). However, there is no reason to suggest that the Normal-faced figurines represent a different goddess from the Bird-faced. The core icono-

[11] Jennifer Webb and David Frankel, “Social Strategies, Ritual and Cosmology in Early Bronze Age Cyprus,” *Levant* 42/2 (2010), 189.

[12] Cyprus maintained long-standing contacts with the Aegean, and especially Crete, since the Middle Bronze Age. Early signs of contact include Middle Minoan ceramic wares from Middle Cypriot tombs in Lapithos and Karmi. By the 16th century the Cypriots had adopted and adapted Linear A into Cypro-Minoan. By the Late Bronze Age contacts with Crete and Mainland Greece were sufficiently common that Aegeanizing styles were prevalent in Cypriot religious architecture and minor arts. See Budin, *Origin of Aphrodite*, 107 with citations.

graphic elements remain the same in both: eroticism, nudity, *en face* posture, and jeweled decoration. Furthermore, such a nude goddess is only minimally attested in the contemporary Aegean.[13] As such, it was not a new goddess whom the Aegeans brought with them to the island, as could be argued for the *phi*, *tau*, and *psi* goddesses and the later Goddess with Upraised Arms which came to dominate the Cypriot repertoire starting in the 12th century. It appears rather that the same nude female who evolved on the island since the EC III merely adopted a new, western fashion.

It is critical to note that although divine, the figurines, both Bird-faced and Normal-faced, are *not* elements of Cypriot *public* ritual.[14] They are most commonly found in contexts domestic and funerary, only occasionally in sanctuaries.[15] In this they contrast strongly with contemporary Aegean-style terracottas. This suggests that they had a *personal* use – that our eroticized figurines functioned on the level of personal, domestic religion.

Nevertheless, their manufacture was sufficiently regularized and widespread throughout the island that a professional level of manufacture is evident. They range on Cyprus from Yialousia in the north, Bamboula in the south, Enkomi in the east, Linou in the west, and throughout the central island.[16] They show regularized, even mass, production, which Vassos Karageorghis has attributed to the "firm establishment of an iconographic type of divinity which these figures represent or with which they were associated, in other words to the standardization of religious beliefs throughout the Island."[17] The existence of such a pancypriot religion already by LC II is supported by the uniformity of cultic equipment found in LC II sanctuaries, suggesting at least some degree of common cult practices and religious beliefs.[18]

In short, there was an eroticized goddess who was *pancypriot* and who functioned at the *domestic* level in Cypriot society. It is likely that the various inhabitants of Cyprus who used the figurines in their daily rituals had their own, personal understandings of and relationships to this deity. Although in her earliest origins she may have been connected with notions of family, by the LC III period (1200–1050) the nude female was divine and divorced from notions of motherhood (or at least no longer associated with kourotrophic iconography).[19]

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13 On nude female/goddess iconography from the Bronze Age Aegean, see Budin, *Origin of Aphrodite*, 47-54 and 56-57, and Stephanie Böhm, *Die ‚Nackte Göttin': zur Ikonographie und Deutung unbekleideter weiblicher Figuren in der frühgriechischen Kunst* (Mainz am Rhein: Philipp von Zabern, 1990), 14-15 and 146.

14 Webb, *Ritual Architecture*, 215.

15 *Ibid*: 211-212.

16 Merrillees, *Mother and Child*, 55.

17 V. Karageorghis, *Coroplastic* II, 21.

18 Steel, *Cyprus Before History*, 177.

19 Budin, *Images*, 266-268.

1.2. Bronzes

Similar ideas come to the fore when we consider the élite LC III bronze cognates of our humble terracottas (Fig. 7). The similarities in iconography between the Normal-faced terracottas and the bronzes are sufficient to suggest that the females of both media were the same entity. The erotic attributes are still emphasized, as is the jewelry and the *en face* posture. Most importantly, these images of the nude goddess maintain their "small," personal aspects even in the élite medium of bronze.

Consider: The most common cognates cited for the bronze goddesses are the Horned God and the Ingot God, both from Enkomi (Fig. 8). Both of these bronze statues were found in sanctuaries. Both have tenons that indicate that they were stood upright. The Horned God is just over 54 cm. in height, the Ingot God 34.5 cm. Both wear horned headgear. All aspects of their iconography, manufacture, and find context indicate that they were cult statues revered in places of relatively public worship.[20]

By contrast, consider our bronze goddesses. There are six of the nude variety (Fig. 9). The tallest, from Bairaktar, is only 10.5 cm tall, while the one from Pyla, is 10.3 cm., with pointy toes that would not allow for erection. The unprovenanced Bomford Goddess is 10 cm. tall, while her close cognate from Teratsoudhia, Paphos comes in at 9.5 cm. The so-called "Double Goddess" from Enkomi is 5.5 cm tall, with a similar double-bronze measuring in at only 3.5 cm! The gods of Enkomi are cult statues; the goddesses are statuettes, bordering on figurines. Furthermore, except for our tiny "Double Goddess" from Enkomi, none of our bronze goddesses come from sacred contexts. The Bomford figurine is without context, the statuette from Pyla from a founder's hoard, the figurine from Paphos came from Tomb 104, a funerary context.[21]

One point of comparison between the bronze goddesses and the Enkomi gods is worth noting, and that is the similar ingot-shaped base on both the Ingot God and the Bomford Figurine. Such a base, combined with the material used to render the objects and the appearance of such items in areas associated with bronze-working (Pyla), suggests that our nude goddess, much as the martial god, is connected with the bronze industry of Cyprus. This may be as a patron of the industry itself, or as the goddess who protects those people involved in the industry.[22]

Once again, our nude goddess, still prevalent throughout the island, is not the sort who receives public worship in public, sacral contexts. She is small and *personal*, appearing in the individual grave or workshop rather than the temple or sanctuary.

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[20] Webb, *Ritual Architecture*, 223-228.

[21] *Ibid*: 232-235.

[22] A. Bernard Knapp, *Copper Production and Divine Protection* (Göteborg: Paul Åströms Förlag, 1986).



Fig. 7: Bomford figurine, Ashmolean Museum, Inv. 1971.888, drawing by Paul C. Butler.



Fig. 8: “Ingot God” (Cyprus Museum, Nicosia, Inv. 16.15) and Late Bronze age bronze “Horned God” (Cyprus Museum, Nicosia, Inv. CM 1949/V-20/6) from Enkomi. Drawing by Paul C. Butler.

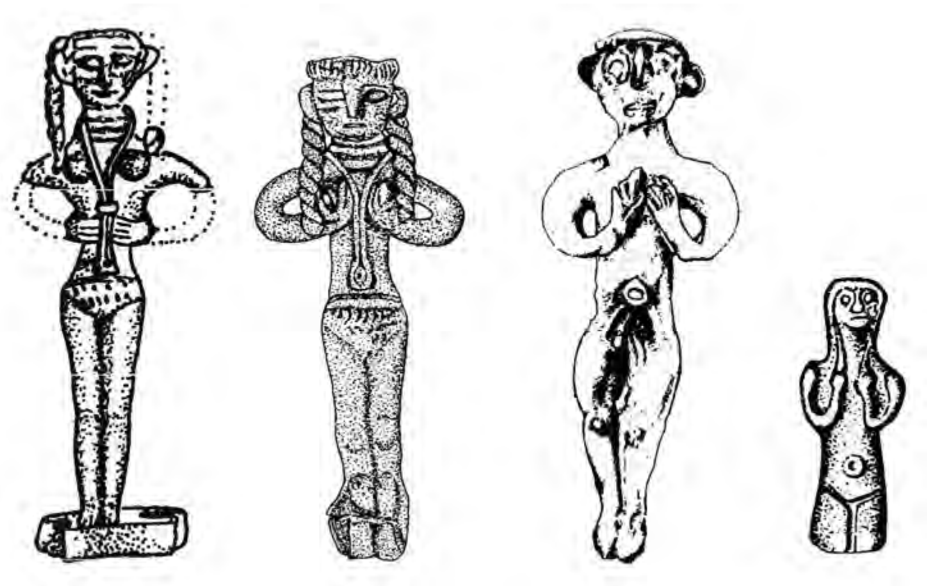


Fig. 9: Four bronze goddess figurines from LBA Cyprus. From Jennifer M. Webb, *Ritual Architecture, Iconography and Practice in the Late Cypriot Bronze Age* (Jonsered: Paul Åströms Förlag, 1999), 233, fig. 80. Used with kind permission of the author.



Fig. 10: Roman-era coin with Palaepaphos baetyl. Drawing by Paul C. Butler.

1.3. Baetyls

The small-scale nature of this goddess iconography on Cyprus does result in a logical question: How were goddesses worshipped in more formal or public circumstances on the island? Much of the physical expression of Cypriot religion derived from external sources, both the Levant and the Aegean, where cult statues are well attested.[23] How is it that the Bronze Age Cypriots did not choose to adopt female cult statues, especially in contrast to the cult statues of male deities as attested at Enkomi?

The answer to this lies, I believe, in the use of an alternate manifestation adopted for goddesses in public contexts: baetyls. Three baetyls came to light in Bronze Age Cyprus, each in a place associated with the cult of a goddess generally, or Kypris-Aphrodite specifically. The one baetyl found *in situ* comes from LC III sanctuary of the Ingot God at Enkomi.[24] That this sanctuary was also dedicated to a goddess is suggested by the proliferation of Aegean-style Goddess With Upraised Arms there. Typically, these are associated with goddess cults. However, there is no contemporary, extant female

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23 On Near Eastern cult statues, see Michael B. Dick, "The Mesopotamian Cult Statue: A Sacramental Encounter with Divinity," in *Cult Images and Divine Representation in the Ancient Near East,* ed. Neal Walls (Boston: ASOR, 2005), 43-67; Theodore J. Lewis, "Syro-Palestinian Iconography and Divine Image," in Neal Walls (ed.), *Cult Images and Divine Representation in the Ancient Near East* (Boston: ASOR, 2005), 69-107; and Tryggve N.D. Mettinger, *No Graven Image? Israelite Aniconism in its Ancient Near Eastern Context* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1995), Chapter 2 with extensive citations. On cult images in the Bronze Age Aegean, see Robert Laffineur, "Seeing is Believing: Reflections on Divine Imagery in the Aegean Bronze Age," in Robert Laffineur and Robin Hägg (eds.), *Potnia: Deities and Religion in the Aegean Bronze Age* (Liège: Université de Liège, 2001), 387-392.

24 Webb, *Ritual Architecture*, 182.

equivalent of the Ingot God who may have functioned as a cult image; the number of GWUAs suggests that they were votives and argues against usage as cult statues. It is possible, however, that the goddess in this instance was manifest by the baetyl, and that the cult focused on a male cult statue and female baetyl. A similar practice occurred at Bronze Age Emar (14th–13th centuries), where sacrifices were offered to dIM (Baal Hadad) and the *sikkanu* (baetyl) of Ḫebat.[25]

Another baetyl came to light near the southeast entrance to the hall of Temple 1 at Kition. Vassos Karageorghis suggests that this stone originally stood on an elevated base on Floor IIIA, thus dating to early in the 12th century BCE.[26] This temple was probably dedicated to a goddess per the female figurines found there, just as its successor would be dedicated to Astarte in the Iron Age (see Bloch-Smith, this volume).

The most famous baetyl in the Cypriot repertoire is, of course, the baetyl of Aphrodite at Paphos, the 1.22 m.-tall cone of green-grey microgabbro revered as the cult image of the goddess well into Roman times, as evidenced from the coinage from the city (Fig. 10). This baetyl was found upside down in a rock-cut pit in the floor in the south Stoa of Sanctuary II at the site, and probably originally belonged in the 12th-century temple.[27] Considerable continuity links this sanctuary with Aphrodite, and textual evidence clearly identifies the goddess herself with the baetyl:

> The statue of the goddess does not have human form; it is a circular block, larger at the bottom and growing smaller to the top, as a cone. The reason for this is obscure. (Tacitus, *Histories*, 2.3)

The data suggest that by the end of the Bronze Age Cypriot baetyls appeared in contexts associated with goddess worship, possibly/probably serving as manifestations of the goddess(es). Whether or not these are all the same goddess is certainly debatable. It should be noted, though, that each of the three sanctuaries has relevant affinities with the others. At least one pair of deities, probably male and female, was revered at both Kition[28] and Enkomi, opening the possibility that this was the same pair, with the goddess worshipped in baetyl form at both. The hypothesis of like goddesses is strengthened when we consider that both sites featured Goddess with Upraised Arms iconography prominently in the late LC III period.[29]

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25 Mettinger, *No Graven Image*, 120; Daniel E. Fleming, *The Installation of Baal's High Priestess at Emar* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 75-76.

26 V. Karageorghis, "On 'Baetyls' in Cyprus," *Levant* 24 (1992), 212.

27 Katarzyna Zeman, "The Aegean Origin of the Aniconic Cult of Aphrodite in Paphos," in Giorgios Papantoniou (ed.), *POCA 2005: Postgraduate Cypriot Archaeology* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2008), 61-64; Webb, *Ritual Architecture*, 182.

28 The hypothesis that a pair of deities was worshipped at Bronze Age Kition is based on the apparent pairing of Temples 2 and 3. See Webb, *Ritual Architecture*, 37-44.

29 Webb, *Ritual Architecture*, 213.

All three sites show a connection between sanctuary and the copper industry, with foundries north of the *temene* at Kition, and located at the site of Paphos *Evreti*.[30] If we accept the Ingot God as a reference to the copper industry, then Enkomi, like Kition and Paphos, shows a correspondence between religion and metallurgy.

All three sites were what A. B. Knapp dubs primary or "first-tier" sites of the Protohistoric Bronze Age, with Kition and Palaepaphos specifically being the largest settlements of their kind.[31] Furthermore, Louise Steel notes that Kition, Enkomi, and Palaepaphos all underwent "an apparent explosion in religious architecture at the urban settlements" in the LC IIC–IIIA period.[32] These combined data suggest that all three underwent similar processes of expansion, political reorganization, and urbanization, including the manipulation of religious ritual by island élites.

The main difference in the three cults is that the goddess of Paphos was worshipped singly, rather than together with a male as at Kition and Enkomi. However, it is likely that a consort god was worshipped at nearby Rantidi, per the excavations of Georgia Bazemore (pers. comm.).

Baetyls, then, are associated with goddess cults, the "sanctified" copper industry, and urbanization. They appear, yet again, when there is considerable foreign influence on the island, and there is debate as to whether the use of baetyls comes from the Levant or the Aegean (assuming that they are not indigenous to the island). The current consensus for Paphos at least is that the influence is Aegean.[33] Nevertheless, eastern Enkomi (*inter alia*) may have been influenced by more oriental neighbors, especially as there appears to be at least superficial similarities between the god (statue)-goddess (baetyl) cult as seen at both Enkomi and (roughly contemporary) Emar.

Evidence from both possible external sources indicates that baetyls might express the *immanence* of divinity. In the Minoan iconography miniature figures, birds, butterflies, and even stars appearing in context with baetyls and apparently ecstatic worshippers may manifest the arrival of the deity into the scene of worship.[34] Or, possibly, the baetyl itself may be an object of worship or veneration, serving as the focus of attention in baetyl scenes and an object of tactile importance, without necessary reference to a "divine descent."[35] The situation in the Near East is more complicated, due both to the greater age and geographic spread of the custom, as well as to the additional data provided by written sources.[36] Sacred stones could function, *inter alia*, in

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30 Budin, *Origin of Aphrodite*, 173 with citations.

31 Knapp, *Prehistoric*, 140.

32 Steel, *Cyprus Before History*, 176.

33 Zeman, "Aegean Origin," *passim*; Mettinger, *No Graven Image*, 84-85.

34 Peter Warren, "Of Baetyls," *Opuscula Atheniensia* 18 (1990), 196.

35 Lucy Goodison, "Gender, Body, and the Minoans: Contemporary and Prehistoric Perceptions," in Katerina Kopaka (ed.), *Fylo: Engendering Prehistoric 'Stratigraphies' in the Aegean and the Mediterranean* (Liège: Université de Liège, 2009), 236-239.

36 On Near Eastern baetyls see Jean-Marie Durand, "La religion amorrite en Syrie à l'époque

cults of the dead as well as territorial markers.[37] However, at least one function prevalent in regions close to Cyprus was as a manifestation of divinity, be this Ḫebat in Emar or Ištar in Mari.[38] As the examples in Cyprus give no hint of connection with funerary ritual, once again the use of baetyls suggests an immanence of divinity, his/her physical presence amongst the worshippers. In both traditions – Aegean and Levantine – the baetyl represents the physical presence of the deity.

An argument can be made that the three goddesses represented by baetyls are the same goddess, although this cannot be certain with the data at hand. There is also no direct evidence that shows that this goddess is the same as the goddess represented by the Bird- and Normal-faced figurines. It is later evidence that combined all of these elements into the persona of Kypris, the highly erotic goddess with her primary cult site at Paphos.

2. Kypris Becomes Aphrodite

2.1. Epigraphy

As stated at the beginning of this paper, the name "Aphrodite" is both rare and late in the Syllabo-Cypriot corpus that gives us our best evidence for *indigenous* religious ideology in Iron Age Cyprus. A 4th-century votive from Chytroi-Kythrea gives us the combination of Aphrodite-Paphia, while a contemporary inscription from Amathus refers to Aphrodite-Kypria.[39] It is only in the fourth century, then, that the Greek goddess Aphrodite appears to integrate herself into the indigenous Cypriot cult.

Far more common in the Syllabo-Cypriot corpus are titles and epithets associated with the (better-known) Greek construct of Aphrodite. The region of Palaepaphos produced seven dedications referring to *Wanas(s)a*, "Queen" (*ICS* 6, 7, 10, 16, 17, 90, 91); Nea Paphos, founded in the fourth century, has produced a single inscription mentioning *Anas(s)a* (*ICS* 4).[40] Although this title is purely Mycenaean Greek, it does not refer to any goddess that the Mycenaeans might have brought over with them. Although the Linear B tablets

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des archives de Mari," in G. Del Olmo Lete (ed.), *Mythologie et religion des Sémites occidentaux* (Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 2008), 344-356; id., *Le culte des pierres et les monuments commémoratifs en Syrie amorrite* (Florilegium Marianum VIII; Paris: SEPOA, 2005); Mettinger, *No Graven Image*.

37 Durand, "La religion amorrite," 356.

38 Durand, "La religion amorrite," 348-350; Durand, *Le culte des pierres*, 26-27 and 59-62; Mettinger, *No Graven Image*, 120; Fleming, *Installation*, 75-76. It is important to note that baetyls might also be used in the cults of male deities such as Dagan, and thus are not exclusive to goddesses.

39 *ICS* #234; Anja Ulbrich, *Kypris: Heiligtümer und Kulte weiblicher Gottheiten auf Zypern in der kyproarchaischen und kyproklassischen Epoche* (Münster: Ugarit Verlag, 2008), 500.

40 The Greek *digamma*/W dropped out of the Greek alphabet in the Archaic Age.

have produced multiple examples of the title *wanax*, referring to a mortal king, the feminine equivalent *wanassa* never appears.[41] Instead, we find the divine title *Potnia*.[42] *Wanassa* is an exclusively Cypriot entity.

Additional divine titles from the Paphos region include *Thea*, "Goddess," and *Golgia*.[43] *Golgia* means "She of Golgoi," a goddess who received dedications at Idalion, Chytroi, and, not surprisingly, Golgoi-Athienou, which has also produced inscriptions to *Thea Golgia* and to *Paphia*.[44] Dedications to *Paphia* were especially prevalent at Chytroi, where twelve such inscriptions were found, including the example equating *Paphia* with Aphrodite (*ICS* 235-240, 242-245, 249).

"Aphrodite" Epithets in the Syllabo-Cypriot Corpus

By Site		By Epithet	
Paphos	*Wanassa*	*Wanassa*	Paphos
	Thea ("Goddess")	/ *Anassa*	/ Nea Paphos
	Golgia		
/ Nea Paphos	*Anassa*	*Paphia*	Chytroi
			Golgoi
Golgoi	*Golgia*		
	Thea Golgia	*Golgia*	Golgoi
	Paphia		Idalion
			Chytroi
Idalion	*Golgia*		Paphos
Chytroi	*Paphia*	*Thea*	Paphos
	Golgia		
	Aphrodite *Paphia*	*Kypria*	Amathus
Amathus	Aphrodite *Kypria*		

The most prominent goddess at Paphos itself was our Queen, *Wanas(s)a*, and it stands to reason that it was this deity who was intended when referenced elsewhere as *Paphia*. Thus, we might link *Paphia* and *Wanassa* with little hesitation. *Golgia* is clearly the goddess of Golgoi, and her cult was sufficiently prominent that the goddess of this locale also received votives in Idalion, Paphos, and Chytroi as well. Two late data suggest that there is

[41] The word *wanassa* is not attested at all in the extant Linear B corpus. There is an adjective *wanassewija* that appears to refer to objects owned by the *wanax*/palace. See Yves Duhoux and Anna Morpurgo Davies (eds.), *A Companion to Linear B: Mycenaean Greek Texts and their World*, Vol. I (Leuven: Peeters, 2008), 317.

[42] On this title see especially Carol G. Thomas and Michael Wedde, "Desperately Seeking Potnia," in Robert Laffineur and Robin Hägg (eds)., *Potnia: Deities and Religion in the Aegean Bronze Age* (Liège: Université de Liège, 2001), 3-14.

[43] Ulbrich, *Kypris*, 500.

[44] *Ibid.*, 498.

reason to identify this *Golgia* with *Wanassa-Paphia*. Pausanias (8.5.2) relates that when the Arkadian, Homeric hero Agapenor "founded Paphos and built Aphrodite's sanctuary at Palaepaphos; the goddess already had a cult in Cyprus at a place called Golgoi." Conversely, in Golgoi there was a strong Aphrodite cult prevalent in the Classical age.[45] Both data indicate that at least in later years the connection between *Golgia*, *Paphia*, and Aphrodite was evident. It is perhaps not a stretch of the imagination to include the generic *Thea* in this litany.

It is significant to note that Kypris originally needed no name on Cyprus. She was, quite simply, *the* goddess, *the* queen. More than any other deity in the Syllabo-Cypriot corpus (see below), she was pointedly identified with the island itself.

2.2. Hellenizing Cyprus

The evidence of the epigraphy indicates that the direct correspondence between Kypris, the indigenous goddess worshipped throughout Cyprus, and her Hellenized counterpart Aphrodite occurred in the fourth century. This is surprising considering the long history of Hellenization on the island. Aegean influence on Cyprus began as early as the Late Cypriot Bronze Age, both from Minoan Crete and, later, Mycenaean Greece. Evidence for Aegean immigration begins in the 12th century,[46] with the earliest evidence for local use of Greek language (in Cypriot writing) emerging at the Skales cemetery at Palaepaphos in the eleventh century (a bronze *obelos* inscribed with the Greek name *o-pe-le-ta-u* = Opheltas).[47] In the ninth century, the influx of Aegeans to the west is complemented by Phoenician colonization to the east, starting at Kition. Throughout all of this, the city of Amathus, although in contact with both Aegean and Phoenician neighbors, remained essentially Cypriot.[48]

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[45] *Ibid.*, 291-294.

[46] The debates and ensuing bibliography on this topic are vast. Good starting points are Knapp, *Prehistoric*, Chapter 5; Maria Iacovou and Demetrios Michaelides (eds.), *Cyprus: The Historicity of the Geometric Horizon* (Nicosia: University of Cyprus, 1999); Vassos Karageorghis (ed.), *Cyprus in the 11th Century B.C.* (Nicosia: Leventis Foundation, 1994).

[47] Knapp, *Prehistoric*, 288, with copious citations.

[48] Maria Iacovou, "Cyprus at the Dawn of the First Millennium BC," in Joanne Clarke (ed.), *Archaeological Perspectives on the Transmission and Transformation of Culture in the Eastern Mediterranean* (Levant Supplementary Series 2; Oxford, 2005), 128-129; Maria Iacovou, "Philistia and Cyprus in the 11th Century BC," in Sy Gitin, Amihai Mazar, and Ephraim Stern (eds.), *Mediterranean Peoples in Transition: Thirteenth to Eleventh Centuries BCE* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1998), 340-341; Pierre Aupert, "Amathus During the First Iron Age," *BASOR* 308 (1997), 20-23; Antoine Hermary, "Amathonte de Chypre et les Phéniciens," in Edward Lipiński (ed.), *Studia Phoenicia V: Phoenicia and the East Mediterranean in the First Millennium B.C.* (Leuven: Peeters, 1987), 376-379.

The Hellenization of Cyprus spiked in the sixth century, when there was a notable increase in east Greek and Athenian pottery imports, as well as influence on Cypro-Archaic sculpture. By the fifth century, Cyprus was a political ally of the Greeks united against the Persians, and most especially allied with the Athenians.[49]

It was not until the fourth century that Cyprus developed a relatively uniform, and uniformly Greek, culture. At the beginning of this century King Evagoras I of Salamis (r. 411–373) officially installed the Greek alphabet in Cyprus, so as to replace the highly localized Cypriot syllabary.[50] By the end of this century the island was unified and pulled under total Hellenized rule by the *Diadokhoi* of Alexander the Great, especially under the Ptolemies. Cyprus became Hellenized, the indigenous culture mostly overwhelmed, and the goddess (or goddesses) once known as *Wanassa*, *Paphia*, *Golgia*, and *Thea* came to be understood as the Goddess of Cyprus (united) – *Kypris*, Greek name Aphrodite, known to the Greeks back home as the Paphian.

2.3. The Goddess of Cyprus

The question remains as to why Kypris-Aphrodite, more so than any other deity, was understood to be the national goddess of Cyprus, to the point that, as noted above, she originally needed no name in the Syllabo-Cypriot corpus. An important point to consider in this regard is that there was no recorded *single* "Goddess of Cyprus" on the island. It is evident that by the Late Bronze Age the Cypriots had a multiplicity of deities. This comes across most clearly in the textual sources we have for the island, both from the Bronze and Iron Ages. A well-known document from Alašiya (Cyprus) found in Ugarit reads:

> To the King, my lord, speak thus:
> From the officer of the one hundred, your servant
> At the feet of my lord, from afar,
> seven and seven times I have fallen.
> I myself have spoken to Baʿal …
> to eternal Šapaš, to ʿAthtart,
> to ʿAnat, to all the gods of Alašiya. (*PRU*. 8)[51]

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[49] Michael Givens, "Cyprus," in *Encyclopedia of Greece and the Hellenic Tradition*, ed. Graham Speake (London: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 2000), 428.

[50] Maria Iacovou, "From the Mycenaean *QA-SI-RE-U* to the Cypriote *PA-SI-LE-WO-SE*: The *Basileus* in the Kingdoms of Cyprus," in Sigrid Deger-Jalkotzy and Irene Lemos (eds.), *Ancient Greece: From the Mycenaean Palaces to the Age of Homer* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 322.

[51] Neal Walls, "PRU.8," in A. Bernard Knapp (ed.), *Sources for the History of Cyprus*, Vol. II (Albany: Greece and Cyprus Research Center, 1986), 36.

In EA 35, we hear from the King of Alašiya (ll. 35-39):

> My brother, do not be concerned that your messenger stayed three years in my country, for the hand of Nergal is in my country and in my house.[52]

In addition to plague (Nergal) and the sun (Šapaš), it appears that *at least* one male deity – Ba'al – and two female deities – Athtart (Astarte) and Anat – are recognized on the island as of the 14th century at the latest.

The later Syllabo-Cypriot corpus also shows that several gods and goddesses were worshipped on the island: Artemis as herself and Agrotera; Athena; Apollo as himself, Alasiotas, Amyklos, Dauxnaphorios, Heleitas, Magirios, and Hylatas; Demeter; Hera; Kore; Zeus; as well as Aphrodite, Wanassa, Golgia, Thea, and Paphia.[53]

A second source of information on the Bronze Age Cypriot pantheon comes from the glyptic. This evidence reveals at least two gods: The Robed-Crowned God and the Master of Animals. As with the gods so too with the goddesses: There existed a Mistress of Animals – a *Potnia Theron* – alongside the Master of Animals, and she may have had an alternate manifestation as a Caprid Goddess specifically. There was a Robed-Crowned Goddess to complement the god. Finally, and most importantly to our investigation here, there was a Nude Goddess, portrayed with horns and wings and thus clearly divine in nature (see Fig. 5).[54]

The coroplastic tradition on Cyprus may also give evidence for different goddesses. Over the course of the Late Bronze Age, in addition to the Bird- and Normal-faced figurines, the island produced Minoan-style Goddesses with Upraised Arms, and Mycenaean *phi*, *tau*, and *psi* figurines. It is possible that these different figurine types embodied a number of different goddesses.

The evidence of the terracotta is complemented by the bronze repertoire. The bronze cult statues from Enkomi reveal that there were probably two male deities revered at the site: the so-called Ingot God of Enkomi and the Horned God, whose own independent sanctuary was near-by (Fig. 8). In contrast to the males and the terracottas, the bronze corpus only gives evidence for one goddess, the nude, *en face* individual who in all respects appears to be iconographically identical to the Normal-faced figurines. Nevertheless, she is merely one of several goddesses and gods attested on the island.

So, put simply, if Kypris-Aphrodite did ultimately emerge as the Cypriot goddess *par excellence*, this was not because of a lack of other deities, or even goddesses, in the early pantheon.

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52 William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 108.

53 Olivier Masson, *Les inscriptions chypriotes syllabiques* (Paris: Éditions E. de Boccard, 1961), 418.

54 Webb, *Ritual Architecture*, 262-270.

At least part of this identification, this distinctively Cypriot persona of the goddess, might be traced back to the goddess's considerable age on the island. Although Anat and Astarte are mentioned on the island in the 14th century, and even though some horned gods were worshipped in Enkomi in the 12th, only the continuous line of female iconography goes back into the Early Bronze Age. Only the eroticized female has a tradition reaching back into the days of ancestor worship on Cyprus. No other religious icon on the island shows indigenous roots, even if those roots do eventually spring Levantine and Aegean foliage.

2.4. Palaepaphos

Age, however, is not the only reason that Kypris came to be recognized the quintessentially Cypriot deity; there were also the goddess's close ties to Paphos. The Paphian title "Queen" and the reference to this goddess as the Paphian elsewhere gives precedence to Paphos in the island-wide cult. Paphos, then, is the critical site in the rise of Kypris and her eventual emergence as Aphrodite. Here the cult of the goddess is attested as early as the Late Bronze Age.[55] As stated above, Palaepaphos was one of the first great Bronze Age urban centers of the island, comparable only to Kition and the eventual "metropolis" of Enkomi. As such, this city of the Queen had from early times the ability to extend its politico-religious proclivities widely. As I have argued elsewhere, it was this Paphian goddess who was exported from Paphos to Greece to evolve into the Greek goddess Aphrodite during the Dark Ages.[56]

Very importantly, Palaepaphos stands out as the only Cypriot city to show full continuity from the Bronze Age through the Roman period,[57] thus anchoring its goddess firmly in indigenous Cypriot tradition and memory. In this way, Paphos serves as the locale where the ancient heritage of the goddess could be manifest as a continuous cult. In this it is distinct from Kition,

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55 Knapp, *Prehistoric*, 228-230; Ulbrich, *Kypris*, 394-404; Budin, *Origin of Aphrodite*, 170-177; Franz G. Maier, "The Temple of Aphrodite at Old Paphos," *Report of the Department of Antiquities, Cyprus* (1975), 69-80. Contra J. Karageorghis (*La Grande Déesse*), who sees the cult of the Cypriot "fertility goddess" dating back into the Neolithic in the Paphos region.

56 Budin, *Origin of Aphrodite*.

57 Steel, *Cyprus Before History*, 188 and 208; Budin, *Origin of Aphrodite*, 189; Franz G. Maier, "Palaipaphos and the Transition to the Early Iron Age," in Maria Iacovou and Demetrios Michaelides (eds.), *Cyprus: The Historicity of the Geometric Horizon* (Nicosia: University of Cyprus, 1999), 79-93; Maria Iacovou, "The Topography of Eleventh Century B.C. Cyprus," in Vassos Karageorghis (ed.), *Cyprus in the 11th Century B.C.* (Nicosia: Leventis Foundation, 1994), 157-158; Jacques Vanschoonwinkel, "La présence grecque à Chypre au XIe siècle av. J.-C.," in Vassos Karageorghis (ed.), *Cyprus in the 11th Century B.C.* (Nicosia: Leventis Foundation, 1994), 110; Vassos Karageorghis and Martha V. Demas, *Excavations at Kition: V. The Pre-Phoenician Levels* (Nicosia: Department of Antiquities, Cyprus, 1985), 272; Franz G. Maier and Vassos Karageorghis, *Paphos: History and Archaeology* (Nicosia: Leventis Foundation, 1984), 126.

where the change-over in population from Cypriot to Phoenician occasioned a change over from Kypris (presumably) to Astarte, whatever similarities these two goddesses certainly possessed.

Probably as early as the Late Bronze Age, but certainly in the Iron Age per the epigraphy, this Paphian Queen came to have supralocal significance, receiving worship not only in her home of Paphos but in regions such as Golgoi and Chytroi as well. Nevertheless, her cult in Palaepaphos remained unique, as is indicated in both the epigraphy and the Archaic statuary. In the former, the kings of Paphos self-identify as the priests of *Wanassa*, almost suggesting a kind of city-wide, if not necessarily island-wide, theocracy.[58] Thus an inscription from fourth-century Paphos reads (*ICS* #16):

ti-mo-ka-ri-wo-se-pa-si-le
wo-se-ta-se-wa-na-sa-se
to-i-ye-[re]-o-se

Timokhariwos, King, the Priest of Wanassa

In the statuary, F. G. Maier has noted that the kings of Paphos had themselves portrayed wearing the symbols of priesthood, thus combining their regal and sacral roles.[59] In this they were unique on the island, and once again display the close combination of the religious and political in Wanassa's home town.

The Kingdom of Paphos, with its priest-kings, eventually emerged as one of the dominant Cypriot kingdoms in the 4th century, offering a western counterpart to Cypriot Salamis as well as Phoenician Kition. A final element in the "Pancypriotization" of Paphia was quite simply the rise of Paphos in political prominence throughout the island, both in the Bronze Age and again, with no real disconnect, in the Iron.

3. One or Many?

One of the biggest problems I have had in dealing with the data from early Cyprus is the matter of syncretism. Put simply, am I dealing with a single, individual goddess worshipped throughout the island since the Bronze Age, or am I dealing with several goddesses, possibly similar, each specific to her own locale, who were later combined into a single entity known as Aphrodite, possibly under Greek influence? Are Our Lady of Paphos, Our Lady of Enkomi, and Our Lady of Kition all one in the same? And do any of them appear as bird-faced?

58 Iacovou, "*QA-SI-RE-U*," 328-329; Franz G. Maier, "Priest Kings in Cyprus," in Edgar Peltenburg (ed.), *Early Society in Cyprus* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1989), 377.

59 Maier, "Priest Kings".

The iconographic data are ultimately ambiguous. The "small" goddess represented by the Bird-faced figurines has enough iconographic specificity and continuity with the Normal-faced figurines and bronzes to suggest a single deity. However, this goddess may be a completely different creature than the goddess revered in baetylic form at Paphos, who, may be a different goddess than the baetylic goddess of Kition. Baetyls simultaneously have both too much and too little iconographic specificity to allow for identification in the absence of textual evidence.

Even the epigraphic data are not as unambiguous as could be desired. Although all later evidence suggests that *Wanassa*, *Thea*, and *Golgia* were a single, integral goddess, there remains the fact that this could be due to a syncretism of earlier, similar yet geographically distinct deities, each unique or at least closely bound to her own area of worship. One might compare it to the use of epithets for Mary in the Catholic Church. In addition to her title "Queen of Heaven," the cognate for our *Wanassa*, she is also "Our Lady of Lourdes," "Our Lady of Fatima," and "Our Lady of Guadalupe," our *Paphia* and *Golgia*, if you will. Whereas all these "Ladies" are understood to be the same individual now, there can be little doubt that some, certainly the Lady of Guadalupe, were originally indigenous goddesses in regions later taken over by Christianity. Our Lady of Guadalupe is a goddess syncretized with our Catholic Queen of Heaven. Just so, a process of syncretism may have taken place on Cyprus with our eventual Aphrodite. The "Queen" of Paphos, the "Goddess," and the "Lady of Golgoi" may have originally been distinct entities, each the goddess of her own *place*, with sufficient similarities to be brought together into an ultimately national goddess – Kypris-Aphrodite – the goddess of the *place* of Cyprus.

Considering how Aphrodite turned out, I believe that all of these elements – iconographic and epigraphic – did eventually combine to form our Goddess of Cyprus, and they reveal much about how the Cypriots understood their goddess. The Bird- and Normal-faced terracottas, as well as the bronze figurines, attest to the goddess's eroticism and links with Eastern goddesses such as Ištar and Išḫara. They indicate that originally the cult of this goddess was a *personal* affair, appearing in private, domestic praxis rather than sanctuaries and temples.

Additionally, the terracottas link the goddess to earlier periods in Cypriot prehistory, perhaps showing an origin in ancestor worship. If so, in her earliest manifestations, our Kypris was literally a regional mother.

The use of baetyls, continuous at Paphos well into the Roman period, likewise reveals the *immanent* nature of our Cypriot goddess. Whether the influence comes from west or east, both possible sources show an understanding of baetyls as either containing or manifesting the deity. The goddess was literally understood to be present amongst her worshippers.

In some locales what would become Aphrodite appears to have been worshipped in conjunction with a male deity, perhaps leading to Aphrodite's

pairing with Hephaistos, Ares, Hermes, and Adonis in Greek cult. At Paphos, however, she was a single woman, a reigning queen with no apparent consort. No wonder this is where she went to plot seductions and recover from adulteries.

4. Conclusion

Kypris was a reigning goddess – Wanassa – who was closely linked both to the individual territories of Cyprus and to the island as a whole. This royal aspect, I believe, was the primary reason that Aphrodite came to be identified with Astarte – both were divine queens. Kypris's associations with powerful urban sites since the Bronze Age, her links to individual locations in the epigraphy, and her exceptionally long (pre-) history on the island, made her, more than any other deity, appropriate as the goddess of the entire island. She was simultaneously close to her people, even maternal, on the small-scale and a national queen at the international level. When the island went Greek, so did their goddess – Kypris became Aphrodite.

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ACADEMIC PRESS FRIBOURG
VANDENHOECK & RUPRECHT GÖTTINGEN

Summary

This book deals with the changing nature of the goddess Ishtar/Astarte/Aphrodite, who was widely revered in the ancient West Asia and the Mediterranean world and was known by different names. Although the three names are often closely related, their mutual relation has not yet been sufficiently clarified. They appear with different characters and attributes in various areas and periods. They may well refer to independent goddesses, each of whom may also be connected with other deities. In this volume, specialists on different areas and periods discuss the theme from various perspectives, allowing a new and broader understanding of the goddess(es) concerned. The areas covered range from Mesopotamia to the Levant, Egypt and the Mediterranean world, the periods embraced from the third millennium BCE to the Hellenistic age.

The volume is the fruit of an international conference held in Tokyo in 2011. Drawing on discussions at the conference, each article was completely rewritten. Contributors include Stephanie L. Budin, Stéphanie Anthonioz, Elizabeth Bloch-Smith, Izak Cornelius, Eiko Matsushima, Mark M. Smith, David T. Sugimoto, Keiko Tazawa and Akio Tsukimoto.